



Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Record of Proceedings, 10 May 2022

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Domestic and Family Violence; Forensic and Scientific Services

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): When I first became Leader of the Opposition in Queensland I made a promise. I promised that if I saw things were a step in the right direction I would say so. Today the government has announced that it intends to introduce coercive control legislation. For many victims of domestic and family violence who suffer in the shadows and the dark corners of our homes and our society, things got a little lighter today. I believe in a Queensland where women are safe. I believe in a Queensland where children feel free. I believe in a Queensland where families should not have to live under the heavy, abusive hand of a controlling individual. I believe in a Queensland where women should know that they will be heard, believed and protected. The sad reality in Queensland is that today is not yet that day.

Domestic and family violence is a scourge on us all. It is happening now at an increasing rate. It happens behind closed doors, out of sight, so often in households where friends and neighbours have no idea. We know the size of the task ahead of us. We are seeking to summit the mountain that gets bigger every day and we have a lot of work to do. We earn respect when more women are safe. We earn respect when more children feel safe. We earn respect when more families can access safety. We earn respect when perpetrators stop hurting and start respecting partners and the privilege of living under the same roof as somebody else. We earn respect when we do this every single day for all victims of domestic and family violence.

From opposition we have advocated to strengthen domestic violence laws for many years. We have been calling for coercive control legislation. We have been advocating for funding for frontline services. We wanted the government to act on non-lethal strangulation. Today is a positive step forward that is in no small part thanks to victims' families, who have continued to speak up for their loved ones. They have raised their voices when perpetrators continued to silence them—people like Sue and Lloyd Clarke. Earlier today I had the privilege of chatting with them. Their emotion and how much this means to them is something this place should grasp. Lloyd sees education as the way of breaking that cycle. He sees this as ensuring the legacy of his beloved daughter. Today, their trauma has led to change.

When I became the opposition leader in Queensland I made another promise. I promised Queenslanders that I would hold the government to account. Today the government announced a review into the Queensland forensic services laboratory. It is something we have been calling for but—I will call it as it is—this does not go far enough. It falls well short. On the same day the government made an announcement aimed at protecting and getting justice for domestic violence victims, it has failed to take genuine action on the failings of the forensic services laboratory. I have seen the terms of reference. We have read them. The government's review will not look into one case—not one previous failing. I have listened to Vicki Blackburn. I heard the pain of a family who have not only lost a loved one to violent crime but also been denied justice.

We are not just talking about Shandee, though; we are talking about potentially thousands of victims being denied justice. We are talking about rapists and murderers who have walked free. We are talking about instances where DNA has not been found in blood, where DNA has not been found in vehicles, where DNA has not been found on a forearm test, where DNA was not even found on an alleged offender—the alleged offender's own DNA!

Sadly, the issues with Forensic and Scientific Services are not new. Previous reviews have shown this, but the government cares more about how things look than about actually doing something. There have been many reviews: the Queensland Audit Office report *Delivering forensic services*; the Forensic Services Group's *Variation in forensic DNA profiling success among sampled items and collection methods: a Queensland perspective*; and Queensland Health's internal analysis of Forensic and Scientific Services. Out of the public eye, issues have been raised but the government has not acted. For this government, out of sight is out of mind. Now it has been found out so, as is always the case, it tries to cobble something together to make it look as though it is acting or, at the very least, to kick the can down the road. As a former attorney, the health minister should understand the importance of getting this service right.

Six weeks ago there was a rushed announcement. In the last six weeks the government still has not found someone to do the review. We do not want a system that is adequate; we want a world-class system that serves the people of Queensland and brings perpetrators to justice. If the state government does not start listening and does not start delivering justice for victims, history and Queenslanders will judge it for such.

Is it the case that this minister and Queensland Health are incapable of running this service? Is that where it has got to? Does the minister understand the significance of the failures? Does the minister understand that this is not a political problem; it is a justice problem? Does the minister see this as a political storm that she can ride out—in the same way that this minister has sought throughout the Queensland health crisis to try and find a way to release pressure valves rather than fix the service that is under her control?

It is nearly one year to the day since the minister stood up—and money was going to be the solution. Some \$100 million was going to fix ambulance ramping. Since that time we have continued to see the Queensland health crisis affect everyday Queenslanders every day. The minister might feel very uncomfortable about the health town hall meetings, but they will continue. We would welcome the minister coming to talk to Queenslanders, because when you look into the whites of the eyes of people who are recounting a harrowing experience of waiting for 4½ hours for a loved one to get out of the back of an ambulance and having to—and I quote—walk over bodies in the waiting room—

Mr Harper: What a load of rubbish!

Mr CRISAFULLI: I am absolutely taking the interjection from the member for Thuringowa, and I will tell you why: he is chair of the committee that ran a sham inquiry into this. Rather than look at the services delivered by Queensland Health—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Thuringowa, you will cease using that report as a prop.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Rather than look at the things that Queensland Health was responsible for, the member ran a sham inquiry. Do members want to know how many times—

Mr HARPER: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I take personal offence and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I withdraw. The report mentioned ambulance ramping zero times. Ambulance ramping in this state is at 38 per cent. I am going to give the minister a little history lesson. The minister wants to say that it is all because of Canberra, COVID and—my favourite—patients who dare to turn up and use the ED. When this government came to office ambulance ramping was at 15 per cent. It was at 30 per cent when former premier Bligh described it as a basket case. Now it is at 38 per cent—the worst in the nation. We do not have any data beyond December. Minister, we would love to see that data. I have a sneaking suspicion it is getting worse—the worst in the nation.

(Time expired)