




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Domestic and Family Violence, Commission of Inquiry

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.52 am): The Premier and I announced our government's response to the landmark Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce report, *Hear her voice*, yesterday. The report made 89 strong recommendations from the submissions of more than 700 very brave women and girls who came forward and shared their experiences.

Whilst the report noted that so many of our hardworking police are saving the lives of women and children escaping violence, it also noted that the senior leadership of the Queensland Police Service is absolutely committed to tackling domestic and family violence and addressing this insidious behaviour. The report did also note that many survivors found that they did not receive adequate police responses when making the brave decision to come forward and report domestic violence, and that is why we have accepted all recommendations of the report which includes a commission of inquiry into Queensland police.

The Acting Police Commissioner, Steve Gollschewski, welcomed the government's acceptance of the recommendation to hold an inquiry. He also acknowledged that there had been some instances where police have not gotten it right and welcomed the opportunity to learn and improve so the service could better protect victims of domestic and family violence. The President of the Queensland Police Union, Ian Leavers, said that after the recent inquest surrounding the deaths of Hannah Clarke and her children it has now formed the view that the inquiry will present a real opportunity to continue to push for genuine reform. This is absolutely not about blaming police; it is about finding the best ways to improve how police respond to women who may be trapped in a controlling relationship. This is about the safety of women and girls.

We acknowledge that domestic and family violence is the single biggest issue that the police deal with—in some regions it makes up 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the work that they do—and we know that in many instances police are experiencing trauma and fatigue themselves due to the increasingly high rates of reports of domestic and family violence, and the cases are complex and distressing. We can do better and we want to make sure that every person impacted by violence, no matter where they live, has their matters heard and listened to. The terms of reference, which I will now table, outline that this four-month commission will examine any cultural issues within the Queensland police relating to the investigation of domestic and family violence, including the impact of over-representation of First Nations people in the criminal justice system.

Tabled paper: Governor-in-Council: Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950—Commissions of Inquiry Order (No. 2) 2022: Order in council commencing 30 May 2022 [629](#).

It will also look at the capability and capacity of the Queensland Police Service to respond to domestic and family violence. The inquiry will be led by Her Honour Judge Deborah Richards and supported by counsel assisting Pat McCafferty QC. Judge Richards is the President of the Childrens

Court of Queensland and she is also a former crown prosecutor and public defender. She also served as a member of the Taskforce on Women and the Criminal Code in 1998 and I thank her for taking on this very important role. I look forward to receiving the report and any recommendations of the inquiry and working with the Premier and my colleagues and the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to continue to improve our responses to domestic and family violence and hold perpetrators to account.