




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 22 February 2023

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION (COMBATING COERCIVE CONTROL) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.51 pm): I rise to address the Domestic and Family Violence Protection (Combating Coercive Control) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. At the outset I associate myself with the contributions of members of both sides of the House. In particular I acknowledge the contribution of the Attorney-General and government members but also shadow ministers and members on this side of the House because this is very important legislation.

There have been many horrific instances of domestic and family violence in Queensland over the last little while that have truly shocked Queensland and shocked myself in relation to the violence that has been perpetrated against women, and in some cases men, but particularly in relation to children and in family circumstances as well. The provisions within this legislation will address and hopefully protect women but also reduce the occurrences of domestic and family violence. It has to be acknowledged, as the member for Toowoomba South said, that there has been significant work that has been contributed not only by the Labor government but also by the former LNP government in relation to the commissioning of the *Not now, not ever* report which was led by Dame Quentin Bryce. Its many recommendations have been implemented by this government and continue to receive bipartisan support.

I will not repeat all of the points that have previously been made, but those specific cases, in particular the death of Hannah Clarke and her three children, the circumstances that Doreen Langham faced and also Tara Brown, were quite shocking. As an elected representative in this place I was not only shocked but outraged that these types of occurrences could occur in the community and that in the 21st century we have these circumstances facing women and children. Addressing pervasive behaviour, coercive control, is important. There is a pattern of behaviour over time that some people fail to recognise or do not particularly understand. Sometimes that might be neighbours, friends or other family members not seeing that form of behaviour and what it can potentially lead to. The provisions in this legislation are very important in relation to tackling those behaviours. As other members of the House have spoken about, I have sat with victims who have experienced very troubling circumstances and I have attempted to assist them through a variety of mechanisms. I know that they will be appreciative that this legislation not only is being introduced but also will receive bipartisan support.

We need cultural change across the community. It is the responsibility of each and every Queenslanders to ensure that they lead the way when it comes to tackling these issues. We have our education programs in schools. I know that there have been steps to further enhance those, in particular ensuring that relationships are respectful and that our young people receive the education that they need in relation to understanding how to conduct themselves individually but also when they are in relationships. It is important that in our homes both parents, relatives and family members continue that important educative work so that we bring up our next generation of young people to understand the importance of being respectful. That modelling needs to take place in homes. We need all of our community leaders, whether that is our teachers, our police officers, our health professionals or

community leaders working together to tackle this issue. In my own electorate of Moggill some of my Rotary clubs, in particular the Kenmore Rotary Club, has undertaken some important community education work and facilitated forums in relation to raising the profile of this issue and working collaboratively with other service clubs and other community leaders to tackle it in our own area.

The other point that I wanted to make is in relation to social media and the responsibility that some of our social media companies have. We know that this cuts across many jurisdictions, but some of the material that I continue to see and that young people are exposed to on social media platforms is cause for real concern as to some of the information that has been promulgated out there. I think they have a greater responsibility to deal with that and ensure that our young people are not being exposed to inappropriate content and content that works against what we are all trying to achieve. We can implement legislation, but it is that cultural change that we need. When children, teenagers and young people have these devices in their hands and they are getting messages from other people that are highly inappropriate and work against educative programs, it is the responsibility of social media companies to ensure that young people are not getting messages which can lead to occurrences of domestic and family violence.

I take the opportunity to acknowledge all members of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee. They have done some very important work in scrutinising this legislation. I also acknowledge all of the submitters to the committee as well because those who make contributions to that very important democratic process ensure that the legislation is fit for purpose. I conclude by commending the bill to the House.