




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (3.21 pm): I think everything that needs to be said in this debate has already been said, so I will keep my contribution brief. I do want to make a couple of remarks in particular on one area of this bill that has not received many comments. Firstly, I think it does the government a disservice when they fail to recognise the leadership that has been offered from time to time from this side of the House on these issues. I look back to the *Not now, not ever* report in 2015. I was not in the House then, but that particular inquiry and the reforms that came from that report have substantially informed so much of what this House has done over the last eight years. I think the people responsible for that—the Liberal National members who were present for that and led that—are under-recognised. I think it is a disservice that the government does not recognise that.

I also want to acknowledge and associate myself with the remarks of the shadow minister as well as the former leader of the opposition, the member for Nanango, and the members for Currumbin and Mudgeeraba in respect of the leadership that this side of the House has offered over the years. I still remember the horror that enveloped this chamber that afternoon as the news came through about Hannah. Some policies came out immediately after that. I reflect on the member for Nanango's contribution, and the member for Ninderry is here; he was the then shadow minister for police, I was the shadow attorney-general and the member for Burnett was our child safety and domestic violence minister. I also mention the member for Mudgeeraba.

There were a lot of policy initiatives that we immediately recognised would be useful in this space. I am talking about coercive control, GPS trackers, additional funding for Women's Legal Service and a summary offence for domestic violence. A lot of these issues that were raised by us at that time have taken years to come about. Contributions from those on our side of the House have raised the length of time it has taken for the government and this Attorney-General to catch up to where we were a number of years ago. I think the government has to recognise that. It also has to recognise the way that we have provided leadership—much of which was from opposition but some was from government with *Not now, not ever*—has encouraged and spurred the government to action, which has ultimately taken too long.

I learnt a lot as shadow attorney-general. I never practised in family law or in the domestic violence space in private practice. However during my time as shadow attorney-general I was shocked by the number of people who despaired at the system. Over that last term I probably talked to a dozen people, often mums and dads, who had daughters who were in very dangerous environments. You know you are really scraping the bottom of the barrel when they are coming to the then shadow attorney-general; every other option had been exhausted. They had been through shelters and spoken with politicians. They had tried everything and they still felt their daughters and their grandchildren were unsafe. It is very difficult sometimes for politicians to provide solutions, particularly in opposition. However, there is no doubt that these provisions—coercive control and the things that will also flow out of *Hear her voice*—are very worthy legislative changes. That is why we will be supporting this bill today.

One area of this bill that has not been commented on much that I want to talk about is the new additions to chapter 33A of the Criminal Code. They relate to cyberstalking and the extension of the offence to threatening, humiliating or abusive behaviour. I want to speak about Tracey and Mick Clayton, who came to see me nearly 12 months ago. Their story has been made public. They lost their precious boy at the end of 2021. He was the victim of catfishing and eventually took his own life.

Meeting Tracey and Mick alerted me to a range of criminal cyber behaviours that I was not aware of. I want to pay tribute to Mick and Tracey and acknowledge their grief and the loss of their precious boy, Zaeden. I asked the Attorney-General to meet with them and I am thankful that the Attorney was amenable to that. She met with Mick and Tracey, and some of those changes to chapter 33A of the Criminal Code are a result of that meeting. I acknowledge the Attorney-General for her graciousness in that meeting and also in acknowledging their loss and their grief in her introductory speech on this bill.

These are important reforms. After meeting Mick and Tracey I went back to the report of the cyberbullying task force that Madonna King chaired and looked through the recommendations. Although that report was done in 2018 after the tragic loss of Dolly Everett, that report was closed out in 2020. I would encourage the government to go back and look at the recommendations, many of which were implemented and fulfilled. However, I do think there are other issues that can be taken up. I know that is also the view of Tracey and Mick.

Nothing will ever replace their precious Zae, but I hope they take some small measure of comfort that reforms like this and those amendments to chapter 33A of the Criminal Code will provide Zae with that legacy. I stand with them in their grief and loss. I thank the Attorney for meeting with them and making these important changes in this bill.

Finally, I associate myself with the remarks of many of our shadow ministers. The opposition will be supporting the bill. There is so much more still to do. We will be standing ready to advocate for women, for children and for families into the future.