



Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**


**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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Record of Proceedings, 30 March 2023

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Palaszczuk Labor Government, Women**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.16 pm): This morning in question time I asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence a question and in her answer she very kindly referred to me as a strong feminist and a mentor for women and girls in my community.

**A government member** interjected.

**Ms HOWARD:** And a very strong unionist, but her answer made me reflect a little as to what has made me a feminist in my life. Like many women, we think about our mothers who are our first mentors and our first leaders in our community. My mother raised the three of us by herself. She had quite a serious illness, but she raised us. She was an incredibly strong and intelligent woman and she led by example as a parent. She showed us that you have dignity and respect for others and that you show kindness and compassion and that none of those things are a weakness because you are a female.

I also reflected a little on the Attorney-General's answer to my question about what the Palaszczuk government has done for women in the last few years, and I am really happy to share some of those things that we have done. We have decriminalised abortion for women which was an incredibly important achievement. It is something that all of my sisters right throughout my adult life have felt passionately about. We have invested \$1.2 billion towards ending violence against women. We have established the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce and we have committed to criminalising coercive control. We were the first state to introduce paid domestic and family violence leave and we are the first cabinet in Australia to have 50 per cent women. I also want to acknowledge the Minister for Education, who is in the House, who is a fantastic role model as well for women and girls. One of the fantastic things that she has done which has really resonated in my electorate is provide free period products in our schools, which is a great achievement.

I grew up in Mackay, as I said, raised by my mother. I had a teenage pregnancy, so members can imagine that I was judged quite harshly. People look at you differently. The father of that child was not judged and looked at differently. I am really proud of both of my children. It is a disadvantage—a background of having a teenage parent—but they have both gone on to achieve incredibly in their lives and it showed that that discrimination and that judgement was harsh and unnecessary. That is something that we should all be mindful of in this House and it is something that women experience more than men—quite a lot more. I am not asking for any tiny violins to be played in here. I know that I am a white woman and I do not have a disability, so I am already doing better—

*(Time expired)*