




Speech By  
**Mark Robinson**

**MEMBER FOR OODGEROO**

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Record of Proceedings, 22 February 2023

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

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (12.07 pm): I rise to speak to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection (Combating Coercive Control) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I support the general intent of the bill to prevent family and domestic violence in our society, to ensure all victims are supported and to ensure that all men, women and children are safe. Over the past almost 14 years that I have represented the people in the Cleveland district, I have stood in this chamber on numerous occasion to support and fight for the victims of domestic and family violence, not only those in my electorate but also all Queenslanders and all Australians. I said in a speech in this chamber in 2017—

Domestic violence is like a cancer in our society. It takes many forms but all forms are harmful and some are deadly. It must be treated much more seriously by community leaders like MPs and uprooted if we are to clean it out from society.

Let us be crystal clear: domestic and family violence is a blight on our society and coercive control is not on. So I am glad to have the opportunity to once again stand up for victims and to call for stronger action to be taken.

In terms of locally, I have also risen in this chamber to support local initiatives in my electorate and more broadly the city of Redlands. I thank the professionals, community groups and volunteers who all work to combat coercive control and prevent domestic and family violence and help victims at critical times. Thank you in particular to the local support services in the Redlands, including Bayside Domestic Violence Initiative—a historical one going back to when I first started—DV Connect, Maybanke Accommodation and Crisis Support Services, the Centre Against Domestic Abuse and the Centre for Women & Co.

I want to also acknowledge WAVSS, the Working Against Violence Support Service, which is a regional domestic and family violence support service that makes a great contribution to the Redlands and Logan areas. Can I also say thank you to all who have organised and attended local events such as the candlelight vigils, the Red Rose Foundation, their Red Bench Project and Diner en Rouge. Thank you to all of the support services that consistently go above and beyond to do their best to ensure that those who reach out for assistance receive the help they require.

Today I am honoured to announce that I have agreed to be part of the newly formed community initiative called Redlands Domestic Violence Awareness, RDVA, as a program ambassador. The goal of the RDVA ambassador program is to create an alliance of Redlands ambassadors who use individual and/or combined resources, knowledge and expertise to positively impact, reduce and ultimately end domestic and family violence in Redland City. The program includes an annual event to raise awareness of domestic and family violence in our community and to raise funds for not-for-profit organisations and charities that work in supporting victims of domestic violence and raise awareness in our community directly and indirectly. I am proud to be part of a community that works to keep each other safe. As the RDVA founder Rabieh Krayem states, 'We all play a part in the solution.'

In my remaining time today I note all of the stated objectives of the bill. They have been covered in many other speeches and I support those stated objectives. In terms of definitions, which are also laid out clearly in the bill, the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce defines coercive control as something that 'is most often perpetrated against women and children, and while each individual case will be different it can include: the gradual isolation of a woman from her friends, family and other supports; degrading put-downs, humiliation and threats; stalking and monitoring her movements, including through electronic devices; the use of technology and/or social media to control and manipulate; financial control; removing reproductive control; micromanaging every aspect of her life—what she wears, when and what she can cook, eat, sleep and leave the house'.

Although this bill is a step forward, I note how long the government has taken to bring it to the parliament. Since 2015 there have been over 400 recommendations, most of which are now duplicated because of the length of time it has taken for the government to act. The LNP supports the modernisation of sexual offences language in the bill; however, we must get the language right. We cannot water down the language just to make it less offensive. Domestic violence is a ghastly offence, so let's call it what it is and be prepared to use legislative language that does not leave any loopholes or create unintended consequences. Legislation to ensure offenders are held to account for these serious offences must be effective.

In terms of removing reproductive control, no woman should be coerced by her partner into either continuing with a pregnancy or terminating her unborn child. Academic studies, including a recent study by the University of Queensland, consistently report that this is a problem. Most studies have focussed on coercion to continue with a pregnancy, but some women are being coerced, even physically forced, into having unwanted terminations, especially in cases of unexpected pregnancies. The very public case of Jaya Taki sadly demonstrates that this form of coercive control and domestic violence is occurring. Jaya was the partner of a Rugby League star. She was forced by her partner to terminate her pregnancy. There are Queensland women who face the same situation. A story in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on March 20, 2017 about Jaya's case states that she was—

... the young woman who exposed NRL player Tim Simona.

...

In an interview with Channel Nine News on Sunday night, Taki revealed that the former player forced her to have an abortion after she became pregnant while the two were still seeing each other. "He said to me, if you have this child you will ruin my life ... It'll haunt me having a child running around," ...

She went on to comply with his demand, the story goes on to say, and ended the pregnancy. The article continues—

... Simona told her having a baby would ruin his career, and that in the days following her positive pregnancy result he refused to talk to her unless it was to confirm dates for the termination to be performed.

...

"In the end," Taki said, "I gave in to him. I was so sick and so tired. He won."

Another report goes on to say that she actually went to a number of parliaments, including here in Queensland. She went on to say in another report—

"As I was to eventually find out domestic violence and abortion are closely linked, and stories such as mine are more common than we would ever think," the young mother told MPs and concerned citizens attending a forum in Queensland's parliament house ...

Further in the article she states—

"I found out I was pregnant at six weeks and whilst I knew the timing wasn't ideal I was actually still excited at the thought of having a baby—unplanned but not unwanted.

"However moments after sharing the news with him (my boyfriend) I was stunned at the heartlessness of his reaction telling me instantly to abort or I would be facing this pregnancy alone."

Ms Taki wiped back tears as she spoke about her experience two years ago and still raw and alive.

"Over the next few weeks I would be subjected to a horrifying amount of domestic abuse and manipulation," she said.

"I had begged him to talk things through with me, to support me keeping the baby but I was told things like 'How could you ruin my life like this' and 'Why would you bring a child into the world when it is unwanted by its father'."

Ms Taki said she knew her story was "more common than we would ever think."

Hearings across state parliaments have heard evidence of this kind of reproductive control. Doctors, counsellors and social workers confirm it is commonly occurring. In the implementation of this legislation I hope the Attorney-General and health minister will ensure that these laws are applied effectively, equally and inclusively so that all women are protected from all forms of reproductive control.

In conclusion, too many women and children in particular are being impacted—in some cases very seriously—by domestic and family violence of all kinds. The government will have the legislation and support when this bill passes, so now they need to ensure they effectively deal with the domestic violence crisis gripping our state. So today, as a newly appointed Redlands RDVA ambassador for the protection of women and children, I call on all men in the Cleveland area and broader Redlands coast—and everywhere—to treat women, children and other men with dignity, respect and kindness, and in so doing to help eradicate domestic and family violence now and into the future.