




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 21 February 2023

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

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (4.34 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection (Combating Coercive Control) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. This government has a keen and obvious interest in eliminating the scourge of domestic and family violence. It is, after all, something that we in the government strive for: a safer community for all Queenslanders. To borrow the words of the Attorney-General, this historic bill comes off the back of the landmark Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce first report, *Hear her voice*. I would like to acknowledge the ongoing work of the task force in this important policy space. I also wish to acknowledge the more than 500 submissions made by courageous victim-survivors. In speaking up, this government has listened and is continuing to deliver.

This bill lays the groundwork for further legislation to be introduced this year which will ultimately see coercive control recognised as a criminal offence. Under the Domestic and Family Violence Protection (Combating Coercive Control) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, the wording of the offence 'unlawful stalking' will be broadened to include the terms 'intimidation, harassment or abuse'. Doing so will allow members of the Queensland Police Service to more easily charge and prosecute offenders who engage in predatory behaviours. It is our hope that by doing this we will transform the approach in dealing with domestic and family violence. These changes will see police officers continue to shift focus to patterns of behaviour rather than mere individual incidents of violence. Indeed, the Queensland Police Service has advised me that the Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command has already commenced exploring further training schemes to implement these current amendments before the House.

In addition, under these amendments the Queensland Police Service will be required to provide a copy of both the respondent's criminal history and domestic violence history to the court in all protection order applications and variation proceedings and sentence hearings for domestic violence offences. This integral change will assist the courts with being able to more accurately assess the risk posed to the aggrieved and therefore take appropriate steps to ensure victim safety. I am advised also by the Queensland Police Service that proactive steps have already been undertaken to enhance information management and sharing procedures to facilitate the provision of this information.

I also want to take some time to address the matters raised in the submissions to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee on the consideration of the bill. In particular, I wish to address the Police Union's comments relating to appropriate resources being allocated in response to this legislation before the House which quite obviously expands the body of work that must be done by the Queensland Police Service. Let me assure the House and all Queenslanders that the government remains committed to ensuring that our frontline services, including the Police Service, are adequately funded to provide the best level of service to the people of Queensland. In fact, in addition to our historic investment of 2,025 additional police personnel over five years, as well as also record police budgets, in November last year

the Premier announced an additional \$100 million reform package arising from the recommendations from the commission of inquiry into police responses to domestic violence. Among other things, this funding will see the rollout of an additional 70 police staff and 300 domestic and family violence support workers in Queensland police stations across Queensland—in addition to many other initiatives. These resourcing commitments are in addition to the more than 2,000 extra police personnel that the government is already funding and already delivering. After all, it is Labor governments that deliver the funding and resources needed for the Queensland Police Service to do its job of keeping the community safe.

I also want to highlight the good work that the Queensland Police Service is doing in rolling out the additional intensive training. Only last week I was in Cairns speaking to one of the police officers who is one of the domestic and family violence coordinators who had just completed—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr RYAN: Excuse me, Mr Deputy Speaker, did the member have something to say?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): You have the call, Minister.

Mr RYAN: I am talking about the good work of the Queensland Police Service and I am getting interjections from those opposite.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have the call, Minister.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Nanango will cease her interjections.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, no more interjections.

Mr RYAN: The sergeant that I was speaking to was telling me about the five-day intensive face-to-face training. She reinforced how important it was and how she was very pleased that the Police Service had taken the initiative to roll that out early. She was very impressed by the extra skills and affirmation that she got from that training around the work that she was doing. She saw the opportunity for other officers to get additional skills from that training.

Of course, that is another aspect of the good work that the Queensland Police Service is doing around building capacity and capability in respect of an officer's ability to engage with victim-survivors and to investigate quite complicated matters. Some of those matters are not clear-cut. There is complexity around domestic violence investigations. The officer told me that that additional training was very important to developing her skills and that she very much valued it.

That is a further example of the impressive work that the Queensland Police Service is doing to develop the experience and talent of its workforce in this space. I know police officers take this work very seriously. They want to make sure that people are protected. They want to make sure that offenders are apprehended and dealt with in accordance with the law. They want to ensure community safety. Anything that we can do to strengthen laws, to provide police with the powers that they need to conduct these investigations as effectively and efficiently as possible—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr RYAN: Excuse me?

Mrs Frecklington: I was talking to Ros.

Mr RYAN: I just heard laughing from the other side.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Nanango, I have noticed that you are on a warning. I ask you to leave the chamber for an hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Nanango withdrew from the chamber at 4.40 pm.

Mr RYAN: Anything that we can do to build the capacity of the Queensland police and support them in the work that they do and the investigations that they undertake I know will also support their great commitment to community safety and, of course, will ensure that they are able to do everything they can to protect victim-survivors and hold offenders to account. The record of the Queensland Police Service on this is one that we should be proud of. They are committed to reform. They are committed to doing more. We should commend our commissioner, Katarina Carroll, for the leadership that she is

showing on reforming the Police Service and ensuring that we have the best possible Police Service for Queenslanders. The Police Service will continue to shape its approaches to improving criminal justice interventions, to protecting and supporting victims and to ensuring that offenders are accountable for their actions.

This bill will further support community safety. It will further support responses to domestic and family violence. It will further support the work that the Queensland Police Service is doing to enhance community safety. I commend the bill to the House.