




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (3.38 pm): I want to zero in on some issues. Firstly, I would draw on the comments made by my colleague the member for Hinchinbrook. There is some really good stuff in the bill that addresses a really serious issue and I would never purport to be an expert or an authority on these issues. However, there has been some language expressed in the debate and I am well aware of those cultural tensions out there now which are challenging a lot of those conservative values in society. It is naive to ignore the fact that they exist and so I want to present the side of the argument from someone with conservative values. This is not to attack the bill, but some emotional language has been used in the debate.

My colleague the member for Hinchinbrook raised the fact, as I interpreted it, that we should not forget males in this equation. We want to apply a gender lens—an issue which I am still getting my head around—because we are often debating issues where there is gender fluidity, but then we zero in on a gender lens where males are the main perpetrators with ‘male toxicity’ and those sorts of words. It feels like it is an attack on males. We work off empirical data and, yes, there is a bias against females which only makes sense because usually males are the bigger, more intimidating person in the relationship. However, there are males who fall victim to this. I have had a very close personal encounter—someone I knew very well—of this issue with someone who never reported anything and, my word, it had an impact on their behaviour, their psychology, their life. They did not report anything. In fact, men are much less likely to report things under this legislation, yet we are saying that this is really bad. There is empirical data from the ABS which I will go back over. The comment was made that statistics from the ABS show that of the 105 people who lost their lives in domestic violence 61 were females and 44 were male.

Whether we want to sit here and debate that all night—they were figures from ABS data—as to whether we think that is right or wrong, why would members charge down the throat of the member for Hinchinbrook for just reporting empirical data? It just shows that in this debate we are trying to be shut down with emotional things. What we are trying to say is that there are men who hurt in this space as well. We talk a lot about setting up things for women—and that is great and we have nothing against that—but we should not forget the males along the way because there are a lot of them hurting as well. When I draw on my own experience from my electorate office, I have heard some horrible stories from females who have been abused in their relationships and, as I said, this is probably doing some good to try to address those situations. Interestingly, a few years ago—I am not sure if it was by way of coincidence or not—I had two First Australian senior ladies who said, ‘Rob, that’s fine that they’ve got these supports in town for the women, but what about the men? My son got caught in this thing and it’s ruined his life. Where’s the supports there for men?’

We sit here time and time again addressing these issues for females as they require it—and that is a good thing—but I want to hear more conversation and as much energy or emotion around the men who fall victim to these circumstances as well, and we would like to be able to debate it maturely.

Instead, we presented some empirical data and people jumped down our throats. It is good for there to be rigour in debate, but we need to at least acknowledge when there is empirical data presented before us.

As I have said, we are supportive of what the government is trying to do here in addressing a very real and serious issue in coercive control, but do not forget the men along the way. We take great exception to people saying, 'You can't bring in this because that's male toxicity. It's got to be a gender lens.' It might have to have a gender lens, but that does not mean that we forget the others either. With that, I reiterate again that we will be supporting the bill on that conditional basis.