




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 23 May 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.07 am): It is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, with the theme being 'It's in our control to end coercive control'. To do this, we must have the mechanisms in place to achieve change, and that is what the Palaszczuk government has committed to do. That is why I am very pleased to be standing here as the Attorney-General to provide an update on the progress of the Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Court rollout—a signature reform of the Palaszczuk government.

I was very honoured to officially open the Southport Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Court back in 2017, following a successful trial. At that time, the Palaszczuk government committed \$69.5 million over four years, with ongoing funding for Southport and the rollout of the specialist model to Beenleigh, Townsville, Mount Isa and Palm Island. Following a positive evaluation of Southport and the findings and recommendations of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, the Palaszczuk government has continued its investment in the Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Court response, with a commitment of a further \$60.4 million last year. The continued investment is based on evidence from the 2021 independent evaluation of Southport that showed that the model prioritises the safety of victims and their children, holds perpetrators accountable and promotes changes in attitudes and behaviour. I am excited to share with the House that plans to establish two additional domestic and family violence courts, in Brisbane and Cairns, are well underway.

We have been working with stakeholders including court staff, police prosecutors, Legal Aid Queensland and women's and men's court support services to get this specialist model in both locations ready to start in the next three months. In talking to magistrates last night at their annual conference, they are eager for the expansion of these proven and successful courts.

I am pleased to report that the Court Link program, which was also set up in the first term of the Palaszczuk government, continues to deliver benefits for vulnerable Queenslanders in locations across the state. This program connects defendants with support to address their social needs, including housing support, mental and physical health needs, and drug and alcohol treatment. The program, which has been operating in eight locations, was recently expanded to Pine Rivers, and I know that the member for Pine Rivers is very excited about that expansion.

The specialist courts and programs operating in the Magistrates Courts throughout the state support some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders, with the aim of keeping victims safe while also reducing offending behaviour. Their continued operation and expansion reflects the collaboration between government and non-government stakeholders, providing a modern and evidence-based court response.