




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Record of Proceedings, 5 March 2024

**CRIMINAL LAW (COERCIVE CONTROL AND AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT) AND
OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER
LEGISLATION (DOUBLE JEOPARDY EXCEPTION AND SUBSEQUENT
APPEALS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.17 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill in this cognate debate. I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee for its detailed consideration of both bills. I would also like to thank the organisations and individuals who made submissions to the committee and participated in the public hearing. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the victim-survivors and their families whose lives have been torn apart as a result of domestic and family violence for their incredible advocacy.

I meet with victim-survivors and families of domestic and family violence from Central Queensland often—too often. The impacts of these crimes on our community are significant: the emotional impact, the financial impact and the ongoing trauma. Children have told me how they have to deal with explaining to their friends at school, ‘Mum’s dead and Dad’s in jail’, or ‘Dad stabbed Mum; now he’s in jail’, or in another case, ‘Gran’s dead; Dad’s in jail.’

Let’s remember that victims and perpetrators are not always in an intimate relationship. Domestic and family violence is not always between intimate partners. Karen Gilliland was the mother of three beautiful children. She was a healthcare worker who lived in our community in Rockhampton. She was tragically murdered by her ex. I know that Karen’s family has been absolutely torn apart by this horrendous crime. They are still picking up the pieces every day. Tayla Black, Murphy Margaret and Susan Duffy are also alleged victims of domestic violence who were taken from their family and friends. The impacts of domestic and family violence on the people in my community are raw, real and palpable. The wounds truly run deep and affect us all in ways that are difficult for me to describe.

I also want to acknowledge the hurt and pain that domestic and family violence has on the practitioners who work to prevent these crimes in our community—the police, the social workers, the solicitors, the psychologists and the domestic and family violence prevention workers. I know that they work so hard to prevent harm and to prevent deaths, and when we lose someone, or a few, it is absolutely devastating.

I am so incredibly proud to be part of a Queensland Labor government which has introduced this landmark legislation to parliament for a new standalone offence of coercive control. Victim-survivors and their families tell me that this is incredibly important legislation to them and it may have made a big difference in their cases.

Debate, on motion of Ms Lauga, adjourned.



Ms LAUGA (Keppel—ALP) (5.23 pm), continuing: The Miles government is committed to ending all forms of domestic and family violence. Let us be clear: coercive control is domestic and family violence. It is abuse perpetrated on a victim designed to harm, punish or frighten their victim. Coercive control is serious. It has serious impacts on the victim and their families and a new standalone offence reflects that non-physical violence is just as dangerous as physical violence. This legislation will implement the government's response to a second tranche of reforms recommended by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, including amending the Criminal Code to establish the offence of coercive control.

I am incredibly pleased that the government has gone further to respond to the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce *Hear her voice* reports in the newly released Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032. I would encourage all members of this place to read that document because it contains some excellent strategies to help women and girls experiencing domestic and family violence and sexual violence so that they have access to sensitive, trauma informed and culturally safe health care here in Queensland.

Through the consultation on the strategy, we heard from 12,000 women and girls who made a submission that they want: equitable access to support for those affected by domestic and family violence and sexual violence, especially in rural and remote areas; improved information and education about domestic and family violence and sexual violence available to young people to assist with prevention and recognition; safe, supportive and informed care and guidance following an experience of domestic and family violence and/or sexual assault or violence; and effective integration of primary health care into secondary, tertiary and other social service systems.

The bill before the House that we are debating today was developed following extensive consultation with stakeholders, including the domestic and family violence sector and the legal profession. The reform builds on the first tranche of legislative amendments to strengthen Queensland's response to coercive control which took effect in 2023. I was proud to rise in this place and speak in support of that first tranche of legislation.

These laws will be supported through broad community education campaigns and tailored communication responses for diverse cohorts. These reforms are also being supported by the development of a domestic and family violence training and change management framework which will inform training across relevant agencies. Other related initiatives include increased resourcing to help perpetrator intervention services meet increased demand and better support for victim-survivors and the development of new programs to hold perpetrators to account.

The bill establishes a court-based perpetrator diversion scheme, introduces a new offence of engaging in domestic and family violence to aid a respondent, and inserts new aggravating factors for domestic violence offences. The Miles government will continue to raise awareness about coercive control to help protect victims from this insidious form of abuse. I am proud today to stand in this place to support this bill. I commend the bills to the House.