



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2024

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.39 am): Today, 1 May, marks the beginning of Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. Every year it is an opportunity for all of us to reflect upon the lives that have been lost to domestic and family violence and to reassert that violence in our communities cannot and will not be tolerated. This government has made progress, although we know there is still much more to do. We have criminalised coercive control. We are improving police responses to domestic and family violence. We are investing \$1.75 billion to tackle the issue. But, more than ever, this 1 May seems to be more poignant and frustrating than it has ever been because, as we sit here today, almost twice as many women have been murdered by men as this time last year—so many of them killed by men known to them. We know that violence against women is inextricably linked to gender inequality, and the sad fact is we still have a long way to go to break down gender inequality, to change community attitudes and to instil respect.

In recent years, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety surveyed 1,700 young Australians aged 16 to 24. They found that almost a quarter of young men think women find it flattering to be persistently pursued even when they say they are not interested. More than one in five young men think that men should take control of relationships and be the head of a household. Over two in five young Australians supported the statement: 'I think it is natural for a man to want to appear in control of his partner in front of his male friends.' When we identify disrespect and gender inequality as the foundation of men's violence, these attitudes from young men in this country are exactly what we are talking about. Until men recognise that these views should not be normal or acceptable, May unfortunately will most likely remain as Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month for years to come.

This is why our government has made unprecedented investments into perpetrator intervention and men's behavioural change programs. Last May we delivered them a 30 per cent increase in funding, and now we have just delivered all of our DV services, including those that work with our perpetrators, a 20 per cent increase in funding. The Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce said that perpetrator programs need to work as part of an integrated system so that her voice and her safety is at the heart of any intervention. In that vein, our government has taken steps to trial a range of specialist programs including youth perpetrator programs and culturally safe programs for First Nations young people. In an Australian first, we are developing a domestic and family violence perpetrator strategy. This is crucial work, but we all have a role to play in addressing cultural attitudes and ending violence at its source.

Once again, I implore every member of this House to ensure they are taking the lead in their communities, because every woman and girl deserves to live in a community where she is respected, celebrated, feels safe and is safe because together—and only together—we can end men’s violence against women.