




Speech By
Hon. Amanda Stoker

MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

Record of Proceedings, 27 August 2025

**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. AJ STOKER** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (10.46 pm): I have learned at least two important things about domestic and family violence in my life so far. The first is that it can touch people from all walks of life. I have lost count of the number of times that someone has said to me, 'I never thought it could happen to my sister' or 'I never thought it could happen to such a strong and educated woman', but it can and it does touch people from all walks of life. The second is that, despite more awareness than ever, fewer taboos and record resourcing for support and education services, crisis help and more police attention than ever before, it remains a stubborn problem.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the difficult and important work that is done in this field by organisations in my local area like Maybanke and the Centre for Women & Co that I have got to meet through the Red Rose Rally that has been organised for the last six years in Cleveland by Ms Anna McCormack. She is a passionate advocate on this issue and has been for a very long time. The Redland Community Centre also provides valuable support in this space. Each provides, in its own unique way, help for those people in our community who face violence at home, with a range of financial help, counselling, refuge and housing services and advice.

Police, support services and victims tell us that the current system is not working, and the numbers bear that out. Calls for DV help surged 280 per cent during the term of the last government. Yes, that reflects the fact that there is more willingness to speak up on this issue on the part of victims, and that is a very good thing, but despite all of the effort that has been made in this area, there are still far too many people experiencing this.

This government has worked with all of the people involved in making a difference in this space to find a new approach for delivering fast protection for people who are at risk. The bill does not change the standards of proof for domestic violence offences nor does it change the way police go about investigating matters of this kind. What will change is that police will be able to issue protection orders more quickly and flexibly.

There are checks and balances put in place for review where that is considered necessary, and there are extra protections provided in the bill for where children are involved. I am not going to go into a line-by-line analysis of the criteria that need to be satisfied to get a police protection direction. Others in this chamber have already done a fine job of that task. Suffice it to say, I am really pleased that this is directed at getting protection in place quickly and flexibly so that police officers can get safety structures in place and then get on to answering the next call for help in our community because we know there are far too many of them.

The bill provides the framework for the piloting of the use of GPS trackers on high-risk perpetrators. These can be applied by a court order and will only be available where the court is satisfied that a person has been convicted of or is charged with a DV offence or an indictable offence of violence or where there is a history of DV charges arising from violence against this particular respondent.

There is a range of practical matters that would be taken into account too. I would not want anyone to think that we have not built in the flexibility that is needed for these to work in a practical sense on the ground. Once a tracker is on a high-risk person, the person who has experienced the violence can then choose to carry their own GPS enabled safety device if they wish. This is a pilot, and it is set up for a two-year period for it to be tested. It will help us know whether it is the missing piece of the puzzle in making a big difference on this issue. Here is what we do know. We know that more of the same will not do. We need to be prepared to innovate, to try new things if we want to see a different result in our community.

The final feature of the bill that I would like to mention is that it makes provision for all Magistrates Courts to allow adult complainants in domestic violence cases to give their evidence-in-chief by a recorded video statement. That is already in place in situations, for instance, where a child is giving evidence, but this step is to ensure that victims of domestic violence are not being retraumatised by having to give evidence of their experience over and over again.

It makes it possible for this to be done in languages other than English too and for translation to occur so that people who have come from other places or who do not have strong English language skills can still get proper protection under the law. It does not abrogate the right to cross-examine where that arises. What it does do though is reduce the number of times a person needs to relive a difficult experience to the absolute minimum that is needed to ensure fairness of the justice system.

Domestic violence is never okay—no matter who does it or where it happens. This bill is an important step in the right direction, using new orders to get more calls for help and protection answered and in place, to enable the trial of new technologies to prevent this behaviour and to collect evidence where it arises from high-risk offenders. It is to minimise the trauma of the justice process as much as it is possible to do so without undermining the reliability of the outcomes of the justice system.

It is an important step. I believe it will make a difference. I commend the government for its willingness to innovate, to try new things, to make sure that we do not face more of the same well into the future. I commend the bill to the House.