




Speech By
Charis Mullen

MEMBER FOR JORDAN

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

 **Ms MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (4.07 pm): I rise to contribute to debate of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. For a number of years in the first month of May our community comes together for an important event in Greater Springfield. As the state member for Jordan and with the support of so many, we gather to acknowledge and remember the many lives lost to domestic and family violence, to raise awareness of the services and supports available to victim-survivors and to say as a community that we will do everything we can to end domestic and family violence. On the night, we come together—domestic and family violence service providers, our police, community groups, sporting clubs, faith leaders, health organisations, multicultural groups and individuals.

We all recognise that there is so much more that we need to do to end DV in our community, and I am heartened that each year more and more people turn up—upstanders in our community—so we were saddened when literally weeks after our annual Domestic and Family Violence Night of Remembrance this year we lost a beautiful young woman in our community as a result of domestic and family violence.

Muzhda Habibi was only 23, was a mother of two young children and had only been in Australia for a very short period of time. Her death was a massive loss to our community and we know many people, particularly those in our broader Afghan community, continue to grieve her death. It goes without saying that domestic and family violence has no place in Queensland and the Labor opposition welcomes reforms that would work towards ending this scourge. I also want to acknowledge the massive challenge our frontline police face when responding to domestic and family violence and also acknowledge their hard work and dedication to addressing these often complex and emotionally charged issues.

I have spoken with our local police on a number of occasions, and I recognise that domestic and family violence cases account for a significant portion of their workload—as we learned in the committee report, a 218 per cent increase based on the data presented. We all agree that more can be done, and more must be done, to address this. That is why the Miles Labor government introduced a significant suite of reforms last year through the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024 that had wideranging support from across the sector.

The Labor opposition will always support evidence-based measures to help reduce pressure on police. However, this cannot come at the expense of the safety of domestic and family violence victim-survivors. While the bill boasts of timely reforms and police efficiencies, it falls considerably short of addressing fundamental concerns and risks raised by voices from the front line of the domestic and family violence prevention sector. It is of utmost importance that any reforms are evidence-based and must prioritise the safety and wellbeing of victim-survivors.

The Crisafulli LNP government promised this to Queensland. They promised to listen to the experts and they promised to put victim-survivors first. However, this bill as it currently stands is in direct

contrast to those promises. Throughout the consultation and the committee process, the domestic and family violence prevention sector and victim-survivors shared their concerns that elements of this bill may negatively impact victim-survivor safety by placing the emphasis squarely on efficiency. It was made clear that PPDs in this manner are not supported by the domestic and family violence sector, with the peak organisation for DFV, QCOSS, stating that they strongly opposed these PPD reforms because they are 'an efficiency measure that does not prioritise the safety and wellbeing of victim-survivors'. In particular, we heard concerns that PPDs increase the risk and the severe consequences of unintentional misidentification of the person most in need of protection. Women's Legal Service raised this during the committee process, stating—

... misidentification often happens due to a lack of information and a need to respond in the moment ... that will be crystallised even more when that response in the moment then becomes a 12-month order.

This bill fails to address these concerns, leaving misidentified victim-survivors at risk of being left without the protections they need and subject to other severe consequences such as potential loss of employment, housing instability, homelessness, social stigma and isolation, just to name a few. These concerns were discussed extensively by the sector and expert legal professionals during the committee's examination. The Queensland Law Society in the committee's public hearing stated—

The consequences of being improperly named as the respondent to a police protection direction will be dire. Victims who are misidentified will not have the benefit of a protection order and may face consequences relating to their housing situation, employment and contact with their children.

Most concerningly, one of the most severe consequences of misidentification is leaving victim-survivors exposed to further violence that could be life-threatening. This echoes the findings from the domestic violence review which show that nearly half of women murdered in domestic and family violence related homicides were misidentified as the person using violence. It is particularly concerning that these consequences will be felt most acutely amongst some of our most vulnerable communities and cohorts, including First Nations Queenslanders, those who are culturally and linguistically diverse and people with a disability or mental health disorder. To simplify the system by sidestepping the courts without provision of measures for misidentification issues is reckless and may only further isolate and limit protections for misidentified female respondents.

Furthermore, the bill fails to appropriately address the loss of information sharing and support service accessibility that is a part of the current process in issuing a police protection direction. The current process of issuing a DVO provides court oversight but, importantly, allows the opportunity for victim-survivors to get connected to support services that they may otherwise not contact. This was raised by the Women's Legal Service, who stated in their submission—

... we also know that attending court is a way that many victim-survivors get support. Many victim-survivors are connected with support services at court that they may not otherwise contact, and receive free legal advice to help them better understand their rights and options.

The Queensland Labor opposition would like to see the legislation enhanced with safeguards for victim-survivors' safety, including consideration of a measure to make it law that a police review, involving a domestic and family violence specialist, must occur if a female is named as the respondent on the order. This safeguard will ensure that, if misidentification is identified, the 12-month order can be revoked to ensure safety for victim-survivors and provide protection from further violence and harm.

A further measure would require the aggrieved to consent to a PPD and the conditions it imposes on the person using violence. This was explored during the examination of the bill by the committee and was supported by stakeholders. A further measure would require police to provide information regarding support services, including counselling, housing support, legal and sexual assault services, to victim-survivors. This should also include an enhancement to ensure the continued involvement, where appropriate, of the Family Responsibilities Commission. This will address any potential missed opportunity for victim-survivors to receive referrals that normally would have been offered through the court process and ensure continued sharing of information between important entities such as the Family Responsibilities Commission.

The Labor opposition believes that with these enhancements allowing for adequate safeguards a form of PPDs could work that would protect victims but also support our hardworking police to do their job. However, PPDs as they are currently drafted fail to promote the safety of victim-survivors. It is clear that the Crisafulli government had no intention of putting victims first or listening to the experts like they promised. This cannot be denied. Even the director-general in charge of domestic and family violence acknowledged this during estimates when she was asked if the DFV sector does not support the new PPD laws. She responded, 'I understand that is true, yes.' The safety of victim-survivors must be the priority of this reform and that is why the Labor opposition cannot support the introduction of PPDs as currently drafted.