




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

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (12.30 pm): I want to start by thanking the entire domestic and family violence sector, which works tremendously hard and has a very tough job, as we all appreciate. They do a terrific job and have done so for decades and decades. I also want to give my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to every serving officer and everyone in admin and working operationally with the Queensland Police Service. They have an unenviable role in front of them, and I think we all appreciate that. In a former life before coming into parliament when I was the chief executive officer of the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group, it was our team—and particularly me—which was responsible for rolling out all of the phase 3 detective training. We would get victims in to talk to the detectives about the impacts of crime on them, particularly serious crime, and they would give advice to police about how those in the service ought to be interacting with people.

I share that because there have been certain comments made in this debate. I reflect on the comments of the Attorney-General last night where she implied—or rather she stated, as have many others—that many on our side do not care or that we have a disregard for victims of crime. Nothing could be further from the truth, and there are many examples right across the chamber. I would hazard a guess that all of us came here with a passion and an interest to make Queensland a safer place. To imply or state otherwise is a mistruth, and it is very irresponsible for members in this House to be doing that.

We all know that domestic and family violence is an absolute scourge on society. It devastates families, victims and police and it destroys lives and communities. The prevalence and the severity of DV is felt for a very long time and undermines the principles of safety and justice here in Queensland. In this parliament our responsibility is clear: every law we pass in this space must keep victim-survivors safe, hold perpetrators to account and make our community safer. We must never compromise safety in the name of expediency or efficiency.

I have heard people in this House during this debate make remarks that nothing was done under our government and that no advancements were made over the last 10 years. I again want to draw the House's attention to the dangerous nature of those comments. They are simply not true. My understanding—and I accept that I am in my second term of parliament, but I have been an observer of parliament and certainly an observer of the conversations around violence and victims in the domestic and family violence space—has been that for many decades both major parties have shown a bipartisan approach to progressive and sustainable reform in the area of domestic and family violence. Politics ought to be set aside to put the interests of victims first. It has concerned me greatly to hear that principle and understanding start to erode during this debate this week.

Queensland has a history of careful, evidence-based and progressive reform in this area. Successive governments—both Labor and the LNP—have worked with the domestic and family violence sector, the courts, police and, most importantly, victim-survivors. The *Not now, not ever* report

was commissioned under the former LNP government, and I have no problem saying that. It was a landmark report and they did a great job with it, and I think that ought to be recognised. We also did tremendous work with our Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. Both of these reports delivered over 400 recommendations, and billions of dollars have been put into this over decades. To imply that nothing has been done is a mistruth and undermines the relationship that we have with each other in this House and it undermines the sector. I want that on the record because a lot of work has been done.

Across all of those reports, not one of them ever recommended the implementation of a PPD, as this bill does. It is not because it was not looked at. It was looked at and it was certainly considered, but it was ruled out as something that was not able to get consensus by the sector and did not have a strong evidence base. It was not that our party looked at it and did not do anything with it; it was that the sector did not want that particular reform. That is the background here. Our reform journey has always been about evidence, partnership and progress, and I believe this bill turns its back on that important history.

This bill allows police to take out a 12-month order on the spot. Unlike DVOs, they do not require court oversight and they will not last for five years. This bill is entirely about efficiency; it is not about safety. In fact, the first objective in the explanatory notes states—

... establish a framework for police protection directions (PPDs) to improve efficiencies for police responding to DFV and reduce the operational impacts—

There is no mention of safety in the explanatory notes whatsoever, and that is highly concerning to me. The risks are obvious. All of the stakeholders have outlined the concerns—not just us. The stakeholders—those working on the front line—have raised concerns, and it is not just the sector. Many police across the state have spoken to me raising their concerns about what this bill will do. They have said that it is a departure from what has been a long, sustained and understood journey in the domestic and family violence space.

The risk of misidentification is extremely high. The commission of inquiry identified misidentification as a key failing. We know that when police make snap decisions in high-stress environments they often mistake victims for aggressors. The data on that is damning. At the time of the inquiry, around 22 to 23 per cent of DFV respondents recorded by police were women, when the accepted evidence from researchers is that the figure should be closer to six to seven per cent. That gap is not a margin of error; it is hundreds and hundreds of women. We know the consequence. The death review board found that almost half of women murdered in domestic violence incidents had been misidentified at least once. I repeat: half—that is an extremely high figure that should concern us all.

To remove judicial oversight in this context is reckless and dangerous. We need independent oversight because it protects victims and it promotes confidence in the system and sector. Importantly, it promotes and protects police. When we visited police in Tasmania, where they have a similar system, the police in that region were saying that they required some kind of oversight and that if it was not the court overlooking it there should be a multidisciplinary panel. Someone should be overlooking the decisions they make. They wanted that. This bill does nothing at all to achieve that. The most alarming thing about this bill is that never before have we seen a government so willing to ignore the sector and move ahead with their own ideological ideas. Not even in the Newman era did we see the disregard for the sector that we are seeing here.

I want to be clear about how we got here. The bill is not the product of careful analysis or expert evidence; it is the product of a political campaign. The Queensland Police Union, or rather its president, Shane Prior, ran a sophisticated campaign—I will give him that—under the slogan 'Make DV a crime every time'. This is a slogan that, again, has no truth to it. Domestic violence is already a crime in Queensland. Any type of activity—an assault, a sexual assault, a rape, a slap, a spit—is already a crime. They have been crimes for a very long time, with DV as an aggravating factor. Coercive control is now a crime in Queensland, thanks to our government.

So, to run a campaign like that was absolutely, I feel, manipulative, and this government has bought into that hook, line and sinker. This was never about victim safety; this was about internal union politics, and unfortunately both QPS officers and now the DV sector has been absolutely sold up the river on this and they will face the consequences of that, which brings me great despair.

In the short time I have left—I have a lot more to say, but I will not get there—I want to finish on this: I want to put on record the concerns I have about the statements made by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence in the House earlier this week when she stood up and made a comment, 'To protect a woman, you have to be able to define a woman.' That comment—

A government member: Hear, hear!

Ms BUSH: Was that a 'hear, hear!'? That comment is recognised as highly transphobic. We know that 50 per cent of trans people experience domestic and family violence. For anybody to be making that comment is offensive, and certainly for a minister to be making a comment that is hateful, that is dangerous. I think it is an absolutely inappropriate comment for anyone to make, let alone a minister, let alone the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. When 50 per cent of trans people are DV victims, it is a highly irresponsible comment to make.