




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

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

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (3.25 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the bill before the House. This is my first speech about this type of issue for quite some time. I want to start with the reflection that, with a matter as complex and wicked as domestic and family violence, the words that we use in this chamber are a reflection on all of us. Domestic and family violence is not a black-and-white matter; it is a complex matter and there is no one silver bullet. The idea that any of us here in this House do not have the thoughts, wishes and feelings of victims at the centre of why we are here—the idea that you are either for victims or against victims—is reductive and largely childish.

We have all given our maiden speeches and no-one came in here with a specific goal or focus of deriding victims of crime, or any other group for that matter. Everyone is in here with the intent of making Queensland a better and safer place; we all just have different approaches on how we do that. I am not going to try and sloganeer and invent my way through this speech. I do not presume to be an expert on domestic and family violence.

I spent 20-odd years in the Police Service. My last posting was as a Queensland police senior project officer for domestic and family violence, travelling the state, delivering training programs and being the trainer for police around the state. When I arrive at my position on this, I look at the experts and I look at their submissions. When we would put together a training course for all of our domestic and family violence coordinators and DVLOs across the state, I would not stand at a platform and preach to all of our DV coordinators. I would actually get the experts in and we would talk about it and have forums because no-one is the centre of truth on this matter.

When I look at this bill before the House, I look at the submissions of the organisations. Notwithstanding my professional experience or that of anyone else in this House, notwithstanding the personal lived experiences of anyone in this House, I look to the DFV sector. No two circumstances of domestic and family violence are the same, so I look to the organisations that see it and work it and breathe it, day in and day out. When we say evidence based, when we say that it is informed by victims, we look to the peak victim organisations so I looked at the submissions of: the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence, the Queensland Mental Health Commission, the North Queensland Women's Legal Service, the Queensland Family and Child Commission, the Australian College of Nurse Practitioners, PeakCare, Anglicare, Soroptimists, Respect, NAPCAN, the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, the Salvation Army, SPEAQ, the Queensland Sexual Assault Network, SSI, the Red Rose Foundation, DVConnect, the Centre for Women & Co., Women's Legal Service Queensland, the Queenslanders with Disability Network, Legal Aid Queensland, QCOSS, DFV Community Advocacy Group and the Victims' Commissioner.

I will go on, but that only got me halfway through the list of submissions. These are the victims groups that have issues with this bill—not all of it. There are some very worthy amendments contained within this bill, but let's talk to what the victims advocacy groups are concerned about. How much of a voice did they have in this process? Sure, they made a submission, but they were ignored. That is the

voice that victims had in this process. As good as statistics are, we can cherry-pick anything we want. I could have picked just one or two and said, 'They do not support it.' Instead, of the submissions, we had 45 advocacy groups who represent a larger and broader number of victim support agencies, who specialise in the DFV sector.

I am not here to demonise the Queensland police. I know exactly what it takes to respond to domestic and family violence. I have done it, as much as any of my former police officer colleagues here have. What I do know is that we have an issue. There was previously an issue. There was, in fact, an independent commission of inquiry into the Queensland Police Service's response to domestic and family violence. Over 78 recommendations came out of the inquiry into the Queensland Police Service responses. I remember that the shadow minister for police of the day had not even bothered to read it. I hope he has now. I sat there with fellow former police officers as they gave their evidence in tears as to the culture that we need to improve—and when I say 'we', holistically as a state we need to improve in our police response to domestic and family violence. This is not the world according to me; this is the world according to a commission of inquiry into the Queensland Police Service response.

That commission of inquiry made 78 recommendations to improve the Queensland police response to DV. Not one of those recommendations contained anything like a PPD. In fact, they recommended greater oversight. In fact, some of the amendments moved by our shadow minister are at the core of the recommendations of the commission of inquiry. I urge those in government to consider implementing those amendments because they go to the core of improving the Queensland Police Service response, not the PPDs.

That is, as I said, not the world according to me. This is now a commission of inquiry. We heard from police officers—not just me or anyone on this side but a range of police officers—past and present, and we heard from a range of stakeholders. The big issue that most have with the PPDs is misidentification and the potential for dire consequences of misidentification. It was submitted in evidence to the committee that three per cent of current orders that are made by police are ruled out by courts. Three per cent is not a huge percentage, but what that means is that 700 people were potentially misidentified, and those are only the ones that are contested.

In misidentification, what happens is that in the heat of the moment, the victim—the real victim; the person most in need of protection—is extremely distressed, extremely agitated and not playing the perfect victim, the easy victim. You have a manipulative, controlling, narcissistic perpetrator who is cool, calm and collected. Police walk in to what is a heightened scenario. We know the statistics around police injuries when responding to domestic and family violence, so when a perpetrator greets them calmly at the door and there is a female surrounded by broken crockery and that kind of thing and she is agitated, she is moving around and she is not listening to instructions, you know exactly who the police will find is most in need of protection, and it is the perpetrator. There are then dire circumstances for that actual victim after police leave—dire circumstances because that person now does not have the referrals and does not have the support—but that is alright because, according to the submission and the statistics provided to the committee, maybe 700 of them a year will find themselves in that situation. I urge—

Mr Purdie: Lucky there are safeguards.

Mrs McMAHON: Safeguards, exactly. There are insufficient safeguards. Everyone in the sector has said there are insufficient safeguards in this system. Twelve months without any oversight! What is the likelihood of that victim of coercive control being able to rock up to a courthouse and contest that? They cannot make phone calls, they do not have money and they cannot leave the house, but all of a sudden there is a safeguard because they can go and contest it. When the perpetrator controls their incoming phone calls so they cannot even get referrals to services, those are—

Mr Purdie: And who helps them? The police. The police have asked for this.

Mrs McMAHON: Yes, because it is all about efficiency; it is not about the victim. The sooner those in government realise that this is not about victims—it is about efficiency, KPIs and numbers—the sooner we get to the truth of this.