




Speech By
Nigel Hutton

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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

 **Mr HUTTON** (Keppel—LNP) (9.02 pm): If we do what we have always done, we will get what we have always got. There have been too many Queenslanders harmed by domestic and family violence. Domestic and family violence is a scourge that all of our communities tragically know all too well. In Keppel we have run campaigns in support of White Ribbon Day and 'Not in our town' campaign, and we have had male leaders step up and speak to our young lads and to our community on how violence is never the answer. A former mayor even once wrote a song to this end, and St Brendan's College runs an annual 'Not now, not ever' domestic violence walk. I cannot deny that the sight of a thousand young men and their teachers proudly wearing their DfV shirts inspires me, yet it is not enough.

In my life I have been witness to the devastating effects that acts of domestic and family violence have on individuals, on their families and, more broadly, on my community. There is nothing quite as debilitating, with that sense in your gut of utter despair, as having a young boy, a cheeky kid, who was so full of life and so much fun, yet one day in your class he turns quiet, he becomes an introvert and he is lost to his classmates all because of the events that are occurring under the roof of his family's home. I say 'debilitating' because you know that every agency is working hard, yet for this little boy you also know that his life is forever changed. It is for these kids that I am here, because I want to make a difference. I want to make a difference for victim-survivors and their families who are at the front line of this scourge.

It was the solemn duty of the Education, Arts and Communities Committee to undertake the study of this proposed bill and to hear from the victims, the agencies and their very proud supporters—all of whom work to ensure that domestic and family violence survivors have their voice heard. I would like to acknowledge the bravery and the tears that were shed by witnesses to our inquiry. I would like to thank particularly our committee secretariat team—Janette, Lynda and Andrew. Quite often they were the first ones to be exposed before others to the retelling of danger, to the expressions of pain and to the sense of security that had been forever lost by so many of the people who came before us.

The Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill seeks to restore safety for our victim-survivors and put victim-survivors first. This bill will hold perpetrators to account and will work to restore safety where you live for all Queenslanders. New initiatives can be scary, yet inaction is not an option. Victim safety is at the heart of these reforms, with GPS trackers to be placed on high-risk domestic and family violence offenders, as well as giving the police the tools they need to offer immediate protection to vulnerable people.

A further way this bill supports victim-survivors is through the implementation of a GPS electronic monitoring pilot for high-risk DfV perpetrators. This was an election commitment of the Crisafulli government. The pilot that will run for two years will place GPS electronic monitors on high-risk domestic and family violence perpetrators and allow victim-survivors to elect whether they wish to carry their own GPS enabled safety device.

We as a committee witnessed the use of this technology and how it provided a coordinated approach to the management of perpetrators and real-time data to inform the safety of DFV survivors. In one case, we watched a replay of a scene of a perpetrator who saw a former partner, a DFV victim-survivor, in her car driving in the opposite direction on a major road. He made a U-turn and he started to follow her. The victim was notified. She was supported to drive her car and find a safe place, and police were able to directly engage with the criminal, who had been driving madly. When the police got to him he was driving wildly up and down the streets, street by street, looking for her because he had lost her car. I wish no-one ever needed this protection. However, in an imperfect world, I am glad this targeted support could be used to make a difference for this survivor.

This bill also allows for police protection directions. Drawn from the Tasmanian model, they were enhanced with the experience and the advice of the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Police Union. These directions will reduce the stress placed upon vulnerable people on their days of greatest challenge. Under the current legislation, police officers can issue police protection notices, which provide victims with temporary protection until an application for a domestic violence order can be heard by a court.

Apprehension, unknown outcomes and stress—this legislation, the Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, will provide a victim of domestic and family violence with immediate 12-month protection and reduce the trauma of an already challenging time. We know that giving evidence in court can retraumatise victim-survivors. This bill enables the Magistrates Court to allow adult complainants in domestic violence criminal proceedings to give their evidence by way of videorecorded statement. The committee heard how the use of video evidence in court proceedings can assist in reducing a victim-survivor's trauma from engaging in and needing to give live evidence in court proceedings.

Domestic and family violence is a scourge that all of our communities know too well. We must do new things and work with all of our hearts to make a difference for domestic and family violence survivors and victims. I commend this bill to the House.