



Speech By
Sandy Bolton

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Record of Proceedings, 27 August 2025

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

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (10.40 pm): Queenslanders experiencing domestic and family violence trauma, both emotional and physical, seek a safe space to heal, rekindle trust and rebuild their lives. This requires space from the perpetrator. The DFV protection legal system currently provides a seven-day police protective notice, PPN, after which a court is required to make a longer domestic violence order, DVO.

The bill provides police the power to issue a 12-month police protection direction, PPD, which serves to both immediately protect victims and provide longer term protection. This is welcome by some, including the DFV Community Advocacy Group and City Women Toowoomba who submitted that delays in protection can put women and children at further risk. This was a key recommendation from the Queensland Police Union. However, organisations including the Queensland Council of Social Service, QCROSS, and the Queensland Law Society, QLS, say the bill appears to prioritise the efficiency and reduction of administrative burden on police officers rather than safety.

At first, I could not understand why as I felt that anything that ensures perpetrators stay away from victims could only be a positive. However, QCROSS explained that, based on evidence and feedback, they strongly oppose this because misidentification at DFV incidents is an ongoing and significant concern, referencing the feedback from DFV organisations of women being wrongly identified as perpetrator, linguistic and cultural barriers and the overcriminalisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. QLS also raised similar concerns, as well as increased breaches of orders and impacts on the family law system.

Submitters felt many police may not have access to the training required to determine who is the perpetrator or the victim, which a full court process would identify, and that removing the requirement for perpetrators to go to court could lead to further traumatisation. Legal Aid Queensland argued that it would not provide the opportunity for either party to seek legal advice or for evidence to be tested and there would be no prospect of either party exercising their right to a fair hearing. Also raised was that going to court is a form of justice for victims, no matter the outcome. There was also concern about the potential for victim-survivors and their children to lose the opportunity for referrals to support services at court.

DV Connect said that it is essential that any proposed reforms include transparent and accountable review mechanisms. I note the bill includes a requirement that the minister ensure the PPD provisions be reviewed two years after commencement. Also called for was a pilot in at least two locations—one rural and one regional—for a 12-month period, with a comprehensive and vigorous evaluation model, and an oversight panel with independent DFV specialists.

I want to go to the improvements to the monitoring of perpetrators, which has again been welcomed by many. The bill establishes a framework to allow courts to place a monitoring device condition on a respondent in certain circumstances when making a DVO. This is intended to focus on victim protection and enable police to respond to electronic monitoring alerts. This was raised with my

office by a resident who was a victim-survivor years ago. She also raised the need for a personal alarm that is linked to the system to give an indication when a perpetrator is in range. This occurs in Tasmania. This would also provide for rapid responses during emergencies.

As noted, on their own these measures cannot keep victim-survivors safe but they complement existing integrated safety planning to deter respondents from breaching DVO conditions which, as we have sadly seen, have not deterred perpetrators in a number of horrific cases. While many submitters support this, QCOSS raised significant concerns and urges legislators to work closely with the DFV sector and victim-survivors to co-design the electronic monitoring pilot, if it goes ahead. I hope that it incorporates personal alarms that have been requested many times.

Lastly, the bill also amends the Evidence Act to simplify, streamline and expand the videorecorded evidence-in-chief, VREC, framework statewide. Giving evidence in court can be traumatic to victim-survivors and obtaining a complainants evidence-in-chief close to the time of an alleged offence and in a location such as a home rather than a police station can assist them in recalling more details about the offending and alleviate some of the trauma and anxiety. This was broadly supported.

In closing, I had thought the proposed amendments in this bill would all be welcomed. However, I was wrong. In learning about the risks raised of potential further traumatisation of victim-survivors, I make a plea to the government to work with QCOSS, the DFV sector and victim-survivors to reduce any risks as well as address concerns raised.

I thank the committee and secretariat in preparing the report and the ongoing willingness of Queenslanders to submit to these inquiries in an effort to reduce domestic violence and trauma. I also give gratitude to all who worked so hard in one of the most complex areas overwhelming our communities. My police are spending literally 70 per cent of their time behind closed doors in DV matters. Our police do an outstanding job. The efforts of our victim-survivor advocates do not go unnoticed nor unappreciated.

I say to anyone out there who is a perpetrator, struggling with anger management, substance abuse or mental issues or anyone who knows someone who is, please ask for help. Every single bit of abuse is preventable and it is up to all of us to see an end to domestic and family violence.