




Speech By
Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MOTION

Safer Families, Safer Communities

 **Ms FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (11.34 am): I have to say that I am a little surprised at this motion from the minister. There used to be a time when there would be a really strong bipartisan approach to tackling violence against women and domestic and family violence. If the minister had been genuine about seeking our support for holding perpetrators to account, tracking those perpetrators and strengthening protections for victims, perhaps we could have been given some notice of this motion. I think it is fair to say that the former Labor government has an incredibly strong track record on this issue. Why come in here and play politics when it comes to domestic and family violence?

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba, you are on the list.

Ms FENTIMAN: Ten days after I became the minister for women I was handed the *Not now, not ever* report from Quentin Bryce—a taskforce that was set up by the LNP that we threw absolutely everything at implementing. There was a bipartisanship approach. Similarly with the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, as the relevant minister for the prevention of domestic and family violence I made sure that those opposite got briefings from the taskforce and at every stage were aware of the reforms we were embarking on—because I can tell you that tackling violence against women is too important for petty politics.

Why would you come in here and surprise the House with a motion about tackling domestic and family violence and not try to get bipartisan support? I am so proud of the former Labor government's record when it comes to tackling violence against women. Not only did we implement all of the recommendations around *Not now, not ever*, we also set up the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, headed by Margaret McMurdo. What did that result in? It resulted in historic law reform to keep women and children protected: criminalising coercive control, introducing affirmative consent and overhauling our criminal justice system to put women and children at the centre. That is what this side of the House absolutely believes in. I would have thought the minister could have reached out and said, 'Hey, today we're going to debate a really important issue.'

This issue is so important to the community. This issue is confronting the entire country because every week two women are killed by a partner or a former partner. None of us is comfortable with that. Every one of us wants to do more, so why come in here and play politics with this issue? Every one of us is absolutely committed to doing everything we can to keep women and children safe. I note that the minister who moved this motion has still never apologised for what all of those community groups and non-government organisations went through under the Newman LNP government when they lost funding and were gagged from speaking out about it. I happened to sit on a board in my community of Logan—the Centre Against Sexual Violence—and worked every day with the counsellors who support women and children who have been sexually assaulted. They were outraged that they had to fire

counsellors and had to think about moving out of their premises because they could not afford the rent. The worst thing about it was that they could not actually talk to stakeholders and the community because they were gagged under the agreements that the member for Clayfield introduced when he was treasurer. There has not been an apology for that.

I think it is pretty clear that those of us on this side of the House are absolutely up for doing anything we can to keep women and children safe. We will continue to work with the stakeholders and take advice from those organisations on the front line. I know that there is lots of chatter at the moment about initiatives that the Queensland Police Service would like to introduce. I urge the minister and the Premier to go and meet with Women's Legal Service and the DV organisations because they have serious concerns about how this will put women at risk.

On this side of the House, we have always stood with those organisations that do the hard work, day in and day out, supporting women and their children escaping violence. Those opposite want to talk about holding perpetrators to account. Not only did we introduce tougher penalties for breaches of DVOs but we also put in place perpetrator strategies that were leading the nation to prevent violence against women in the first place. Because this is about men committing violence against women, we have to start with young boys—the next generation. We are up for it. Come and talk to us. We are happy to support it.