



Speech by

Dr Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Hansard Wednesday, 25 November 2009

WHITE RIBBON DAY

Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (10.08 pm): Well done, Di, and I enjoyed being there with you. I would like to recognise in the gallery members of the United Motorcycle Council and commend them for their involvement and their interest in the debate today.

On this White Ribbon Day, I rise to speak about the blight on our society called domestic violence. I add my comments to those of the Premier's in her ministerial statement this morning. Domestic violence is rife in our society and is a most heinous crime against women. In Queensland in the past five years there have been up to 60 domestic violence related deaths. Indigenous women are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence.

Vulnerable women and children need support to survive the hell of domestic violence and to recreate a caring and fear-free home environment. Today I joined many others—men and women—on the Speakers Green to support White Ribbon Day. I also joined with many men to sign an oath on www.myoath.com.au in which I swore 'never to commit violence against women, never to excuse violence against women and never to remain silent about violence against women.' This is my oath and I ask that every Queensland man go online and make their own commitment.

The oath includes a statement to never be silent about violence against women. To this aim, previously in this House I have mentioned the work and plight of the Bayside Domestic Violence Initiative—BDVI. BDVI provides court assistance for victims of domestic violence at the Cleveland and Wynnum Magistrates Courts, among other services. Its activities, under the direction of president, Pauline Eglington, cover at least four electorates in south-east Brisbane: Lytton, Capalaba, Cleveland and Redlands.

It came to my attention earlier this year that it was about to shut down due to a lack of funding. Its voice about violence against women was almost silenced. Despite requesting funds from the government, it had received nothing. I met with its members, spoke in the parliament about their plight, discussed their case with the member for Capalaba and some emergency funding was provided. I do not want to overstate my involvement in the outcome but I do want to thank the government for coming to their aid.

However, now the emergency funding is running out. Last Friday I was invited to a fundraising dinner in Cleveland, run by Females and Friends in the Finance Industry, known as FFI. What a fantastic group of women committed to this important cause. The fundraising efforts of this dedicated group of local women has helped to keep BDVI afloat. But now BDVI needs recurrent government funding to add to its own fundraising efforts or it will have to close, its voice will be silenced and our women will stand alone in our courts—victims of violence and of abandonment.

I noted that today Minister Struthers announced funding for a program in Rockhampton as a genuine coming-together of government, the courts and the non-government sector. I simply ask that the women of south-east Brisbane be given a chance. Recurrent funding is needed now so that BDVI can continue its service and not close its doors.