



Speech By  
**Jann Stuckey**

**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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## **DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (8.40 pm): I rise to speak on the Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. From the outset I would like to acknowledge that the LNP supports the government in this bipartisan approach to addressing the abhorrent societal shortcoming that is domestic violence. The LNP determined during the last parliament that the prevalence of domestic violence was escalating and not enough was being done to protect women in particular. In recognition of this, in 2014 we established the special task force headed up by Dame Quentin Bryce. Earlier this year the task force report, *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*, handed down 140 recommendations to address the horrendous issue of domestic and family violence.

I note the policy objectives of this bill are to protect the person most in need where there are conflicting allegations of domestic and family violence. To assist this process, the court is required to consider excluding the perpetrator from the home and to recognise the importance of victims being able to express their views through victim statements which would attract mandatory consideration. Police officers will have the use of body worn cameras in these circumstances made lawful. I was speaking with a number of police officers on Saturday at a White Ribbon awareness day hosted by the dedicated team at Palm Beach Neighbourhood Centre. They are pleased with the new laws regarding body worn cameras and say they will provide invaluable evidence. All too often victims go cold about going to court out of fear and the evidence captured on camera gives them courage. I asked about increased reporting and they informed me that in some Gold Coast suburbs the rate is up by 30 per cent, especially in light of recent shocking tragedies resulting in the violent deaths of two women—whom, I might add, were murdered away from their homes. I would like to place on record the special efforts of Samantha Way, Jill Wynd and their colleagues for organising this free family event in one of our local parks. I would also like to thank our police and fireys for their big efforts in the tug-of-war competition, as well as our sporting teams, the Titans and the Suns, who gave more depth to the *Not now, not ever* campaign by standing side by side and reciting the oath against domestic violence. I have often said how proud I am of Currumbin being a connected and caring community and Saturday, 28 November was another example of this.

Implementation of these amendments to the act will require courts aware of cross-applications to hear all cross-applications together and determine the person most in need of protection, unless the interests of safety, protection and wellbeing of an aggrieved require that applications be dealt with separately; call for the court to consider imposing an ouster condition to remove a perpetrator from the family home, whilst taking into account the wishes of the aggrieved; and introduce the principle that the views and wishes of individuals who currently fear or experience domestic violence should be sought before a decision is made where it is practicable and appropriate to do so. Unsurprisingly, the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee recommends that this bill be passed.

During my time in this House I have held a number of positions, including shadow minister for women, child safety and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community development. Of all women who are victims of domestic violence, it those in our Indigenous communities who are the most vulnerable and unheard. To ensure their voices are heard in relation to the court processes amended by this bill, we will need to look at ways of approaching them so they feel secure in sharing their views. This is particularly true of Indigenous women. Shy by nature, it takes enormous guts to report and go to court—to go on television though is monumental. We saw two brave women do that in recent months. For no charges to be laid against the alleged perpetrator must have been a huge blow to them and lessen their trust in the white man's system.

I recall exposing the fact a few years ago that grade 7 girls from Woorabinda were having contraceptive implants lodged under their skin as a pregnancy prevention measure. A 12-year-old child cannot give informed consent, but the Labor Party condoned this activity that actually encouraged domestic violence against children. The Labor government would not own up to who was doing these procedures and wanted it swept under the carpet. My husband, a GP, was outraged that children would be put in harm's way like this. Whilst Implanon or other contraceptive implants prevent pregnancy, where was the sex education about STDs and other contagious sexual diseases, let alone the young age of these girls? As I said at the time, imagine if this were happening here in schools in South-East Queensland? I want, through this piece of legislation, to call on the Palaszczuk government to guarantee these practices are no longer happening and that all children in Queensland receive the same degree of protection.

Over the years my husband has visited a number of women in refuges or safe houses in his role as a GP. He has told me some terribly sad and disturbing accounts of what these women went through. Their fear is unfathomable unless you have witnessed it. More refuges are needed as this campaign gives more women the confidence to come forward and crimes, particularly those fuelled by new-age drugs, become more violent and more deadly. I acknowledge yesterday's announcement of two new shelters in Brisbane and Townsville. I hope the Gold Coast is next on the list.

Domestic violence is not a new problem, nor is it a passing fad. Often unreported, it has occurred in homes behind closed doors and in remote communities for decades. Whilst the ouster conditions are welcomed, recent deplorable incidents on the Gold Coast occurred outside of the family home with television footage shocking viewers. The ferocity and callousness of these attacks, where former loved ones cold-bloodedly murdered their defenceless partners, has shaken many of us to the core. The community must step up and unite in their disgust with, and intolerance of, abusive and violent behaviour. Awareness days and early education must be fast-tracked to maximise the effect.

Domestic violence affects the elderly as well and their frail voices must be heard too. Last weekend I read Kylie Lang's article. Her comments about language being the precursor in many cases is a valid point. From disparaging comments about physical appearance to controlling behaviours and hurling abuse, this behaviour in all too many cases helps to desensitise and lay the foundations for violence to creep into relationships. The culture must change. Bills such as this make one draw upon their own experiences, their youth and growing up. Perhaps as politicians we could take a leaf out of Kylie Lang's book, so to speak, and reduce the number of deeply personalised verbal attacks tossed across the chamber and stick to legislating good policy debated in a robust manner with performance based objections. Minister Cameron Dick's cheap political pointscoring attack a few weeks ago here in this House on my comments about vaccinating autistic children was not only offensive to me but also to thousands of children and their families who suffer from autism. When I write to these groups and include my speech and the minister's comments, I am sure they will be as disgusted as I was that my genuine attempts to see more children vaccinated were mocked by Cameron Dick, a man who should know better.

The role of women has changed drastically since I was a child in postwar years when most women stayed home, raised families, there was no internet and people minded their own business. Many advances have been made, but the scourge that is domestic violence remains. I have listened to many of the speeches here today and tonight and the conviction of the honourable members in this House should give hope to victims and vulnerable individuals that we are united in our condemnation of domestic violence and in our sincere attempts to stamp it out. This legislation is an important step towards realising the goal of the task force report *Not now, not ever* and will pave the way forward for a safer community for all Queenslanders to enjoy. I am very proud it was an LNP government which commenced this task force last year and I am happy to support this Labor government's legislation.