



Speech By  
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**VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; BAIL (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (11.08 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the cognate debate of the Bail (Domestic Violence) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2017 and the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I will focus my brief contribution on the former bill. I want to start by commending the Leader of the Opposition and member for Clayfield, Tim Nicholls, for bringing this particular bill forward and, in doing so, continuing the record of the LNP of looking to lead the way in terms of justice and support for victims of domestic and family violence. It is now the beginning of my ninth year as the member for Cleveland. I have represented the victims of domestic and family violence in my electorate and beyond on numerous occasions—too many occasions.

I have stood in this place on several occasions to do what I can to represent victims of domestic violence in Redland City and elsewhere. Whether as a member of parliament acting on behalf of constituents, whether as a friend in connection with individuals who are victims or as a pastor, I have sought to speak out in support of victims, sufferers and survivors where possible. Unfortunately, I am old enough to have seen too much, whether that has been as an MP, friend or pastor. I have to say that domestic violence, being the insidious thing that it is, seems to get its tentacles into all kinds of places in our society, and as a pastor it is sad to say that it also finds its way into churches and church communities. In that regard my experience has been one of coming into contact with people—particularly women—who are suffering from forms of domestic violence who know somebody in the life of the church, and through that person an individual, often outside of the church, and has been able to find some support and care. I believe that is a good thing. In my earlier days, as a much younger man, as someone who was disconnected from the church, even in my most irreligious moments I always believed that it was very important for community groups and church groups to reach out to help and support people who are disadvantaged and find themselves in very difficult and traumatic life situations.

In those various ways my family, my wife and I, have come into contact with individuals who have needed help and support. One of the most disturbing things for me has been to see women go through not only physical and other forms of abuse but circumstances where somebody who once has been violent and is in jail is now facing the potential of coming out of jail. To be along on that journey with women and to see what they go through, wondering what is going to happen—and sometimes not even really knowing—and finding out from a third person that so and so is getting out of jail and worrying that he will come straight for her, I think that is an incredibly terrible situation that women find themselves in. It is terrible for them to have to go through that.

In this House I have spoken of various matters and I have challenged the government at times. There was a time when the Bligh Labor government cut financial court support for domestic violence victims in my electorate of Cleveland, and we had to come to parliament and talk with the minister and argue a strong case in order to get that funding reinstated. It is something that you would not believe could have happened, but it did happen. That should never happen again, and that is why I mention it on a regular basis in this House so that it never does happen again.

Working Against Violence Support Services, WAVSS, is a regional domestic and family violence service organisation in Logan and Redlands which does a fantastic job. We have groups that offer women shelter in the Redlands, and they do not always like to be named in this place. I have mentioned them from time to time; I will not mention them by name today. They know who they are. They do a fantastic job in our community and I commend them. I also want to acknowledge the work done by a group called Red & White Ribbon, a domestic and family violence support agency that helps all women. I have more recently become aware of them as another form of support agency out there which seems to be one of the most inclusive groups operating in Australia, and I certainly commend them.

The stated aims of the bill are: to reverse the presumption of bail for an alleged offender charged with a relevant domestic violence offence; to establish a special bail condition for a tracking device on a person charged with a domestic violence offence; to introduce a new victim alert system so that victims are made aware when the defendant applies for bail, is released on bail or receives a variation to a bail condition; to introduce a mandatory reporting provision to the parole system so that domestic violence victims can receive information about a prisoner; and to allow for the urgent review of bail conditions in higher courts and ensure that offenders will not be released in that period.

Sadly, we have seen domestic violence permeate our society at every level, place and culture in so many different ways. The incidents seem to be on the rise. In 2016, 18 Queensland women were killed at the hands of their partner, accounting for 25 per cent of all domestic violence related deaths in Australia. Something more must be done. Stronger measures are needed now to protect victims and their families. I believe that this bill does that. It is about putting community safety first. Recent domestic violence crimes demand a stronger response from government. As the opposition leader has pointed out, a few weeks ago Teresa Bradford was tragically murdered at the Gold Coast in front of her children. Her attacker had tried to kill her late last year. He was released on bail and then brutally murdered her. Cases like Teresa's are extreme but occur all too often. Recent cases of domestic violence show that this scourge happens in many different ways with varying impacts, but all are harmful. Not all result in death, but all forms of domestic and family violence are harmful and must be more effectively addressed.

One recent report which shows the wide reach of this problem is that concerning the former girlfriend of disgraced NRL star Tim Simona, Jaya Taki. The report revealed how Jaya considered self-harm after being treated terribly by Tim Simona. Jaya said she remained traumatised by the relationship and called on the NRL to do more in the fight against domestic violence. In calling for tougher measures within the NRL Jaya said, 'If you so much as threaten a woman, you put your hands on her, you sexually assault her'—or, as in her case—'you force her into an abortion, you emotionally blackmail her, you're gone. It should be an indefinite ban.' With respect to the NRL, there is the recent Bryce Cartwright scandal in which Bryce is alleged to have tried to bully a 'Miss X' into an unwanted abortion. No woman should have to suffer this type of bullying and intimidation.

In consideration of the Pyne bill the health committee also heard the expert witness testimony of women who were victims of domestic violence and who were coerced and even forced into unwanted abortions—women like Deb, Madeline and Adriana. The stories of these women are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to domestic and family violence and they illustrate the diverse forms that domestic violence takes. Domestic violence is like a cancer in our society. It takes many forms, but all forms are harmful and some are deadly. It must be treated much more seriously by community leaders like members of parliament and routed out if we are to clean it out from society. It is time to take stronger action to protect women and children. I support the Leader of the Opposition's bill.