

Legislative Council
HANSARD
Thursday, 13 March 2025

Debate on the *Family Violence Amendment Bill 2024 (No. 51)*

[excerpt...]

[11.36 a.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I am so pleased to rise to speak very briefly on this bill and appreciate the contributions made by other members. I am really just adding a hear-hear to those in some sense.

I appreciate that others have already acknowledged victim-survivors in relation to family violence, women and children in our community, but also anybody potentially across our community who may be affected by family violence. I also add my acknowledgement to those who work in the family violence sector who are everyday in the frontline of this and providing support and services and finding solutions and options - often scrambling for options that there simply are not enough of in our community to make sure that people who are experiencing family violence can be somewhere safe.

I acknowledge as well and celebrate the fact this bill has arisen in part from that lived experience at the frontline, providing support and services and the observations of what would work better in that area. Tasmania Legal Aid coming forward with these very practical, small but very significant tweaks to the act is consequential in the long run.

It is incredibly satisfying in this place on a day where we can say this thing that we are doing today is going to make our community better. It is going to make people in our community safer. That is so at odds with a lot of what can happen here that has a more negative or less constructive tone to it. Today I am hopeful we will see this resoundingly supported in this place as it was in the other place. We can all take from that a sense of satisfaction for our community.

The fact it has come about through collaborative means has been noted already by others who have spoken. It is always important to celebrate when that has come about. Before I was in this place, as an external stakeholder I had noted over a number of years, in a range of examples, instances of tripartisan effort, particularly from women across the parliament, to deliver tangible outcomes on matters relating to women primarily, such as family violence, where the great burden of the impact is felt by women and children in the community.

I had always felt proud observing that from the outside of parliament of the fact the women in the parliament could come together and deliver those outcomes. I am so pleased to see that continuing. I add my gratitude and congratulations to the member for Clark, Kristie Johnston, for initiating this and working with the community sector representatives and others in the parliament to bring forward this bill and then also for the government and for the minister to be taking carriage of it and be so supportive of it in this place. That is certainly a good positive example that would be excellent to see replicated more and more often.

I do hope there is a fairly prompt and tangible plan to bring forward a more comprehensive review of the act that has been spoken about and acknowledged as being necessary. While small tweaks can often be significant and good to make and deliver a tangible outcome, we do also need to make sure that the whole act can be regarded as fit for purpose and can be brought up to a standard and expectation to deliver the outcomes we want to see in this area and modernised as we go forward and learn more.

We do have a growing appreciation and understanding of this issue in the community and in this parliament, as the member for Rumney said. Despite that, we still see such an enduring difficulty to shift observation of it in our community. We see the figures of women being killed in this country by intimate partners or family members still at such high levels. I think last year it had increased again in terms of frequency. That is so disturbing.

We are still teetering in that space of better understanding, growing sensitivity around this issue within our community, but not yet doing two things that are crucially important for actually changing outcomes. Those two things are providing the right and adequate level of support and services to those who are being impacted by this. That is still a failure that we see. That is why we still see such terrible outcomes in terms of injury and death ultimately in relation to this issue. We also do not see enough public health preventative measures on this issue; we still do not see that.

If we were to see that, we would see us putting a lot more focus into working with men and boys in our community, a hell of a lot more focus. Knowing that although the statistics show anybody could be either a victim or a perpetrator of family violence, we do know that there is a gender bias in this issue. We are failing boys and men in our country by our lack of investment in preventative efforts here - knowing this issue rests on an underpinning cultural gender bias that we have; knowing that is where it grows from; knowing that we have intergenerational cycles of family violence that exist and are not being effectively interrupted.

We should always be turning our minds to that preventative side of things and that being a much more explicitly stated understanding - that means working with boys and men. Not because they are broken, wrong or bad, but because they deserve support to not be caught up in this issue and become perpetrators of family violence, because that is what they have seen and that is what they have learned.

I am very pleased to be supporting this bill, I am very proud of this parliament and thankful for the member for Clark and the minister for bringing this through and hopeful we will see further work on this issue, both in responding to it and supporting those affected by it, but also preventing it, and in doing so, supporting boys and men in our community better.

[ends]