

Legislative Council
Hansard
Tuesday 18 August 2026

[excerpt...]

The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

MOTION

Joint Sessional Committee Gender, Gender-based Violence and Equality

[3.25 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - I rise to support this motion briefly. I thank other members for their contributions, particularly with some detail there. I won't add too much detail other than to support those things already stated. I think I'm similarly placed to the member for Rumney in that this isn't my preferred option going forward either. I would have wanted to see the previously planned committee go forward, so I recognise that this is an acceptable plan B.

It's not jarringly unaligned with the committee that it's being inserted into and forming a new remit for. However, it's incredibly disappointing the previous committee that was specifically focused on this area did not get formed in this place. That's the reality of it in this place and it makes me feel quite disturbed actually that's the case.

Having said that, I fully recognise that this is a small Chamber of 15 members, numerous of whom can't do committee work readily because they're either in positions like yourself, or they're in executive government positions holding portfolios. That takes capacity away from this place to to undertake its committee work which is limiting.

The other thing though I can't help but reflect on is the fact that so often when this topic is being discussed in the community, in this place, by service providers, it's women talking to women almost every time, almost every time. As much as I admire the work that's done with the current minister for the Prevention of Family Violence that we have in this Chamber and again, taking that mantle on after previously holding it at other times, and she does an excellent job in the role previously and I have every confidence will continue to do that now.

It's no comment on her in the role, but the minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, to my understanding, has always been a woman in this Parliament. Why is that? Maybe we need to rename it, the minister for the Prevention of Men's Violence, with the expectation that would always be a man actually, who undertakes that portfolio, because this is really problematic, as others have mentioned. We have women dying, we have Tasmanian women dying this year as a result, it would appear, of men's violence. We have women being assaulted every day in this state, women we know, women we're related to as a result of men's violence towards women.

When it's just women talking to women about how to solve this, or how we better understand this, or how we better address this, that's clearly not getting us anywhere fast, much as we are all making best efforts in those areas. It's no comment on the women who are trying their utmost as service providers, as members of the community, as family members, as

members of this place, trying their utmost for genuine progress here.

We are not making genuine progress, and I can't help but feel that what we're doing here is an indicator of the fact that again, we've failed to make genuine progress because we've failed to put together a standalone committee on this issue that gave it the prominence and the specific focus that it deserves and requires. And I can't help but wonder whether that's because we're still women talking to women, putting that committee together. Where were the male members of this parliament stepping up for that? Perhaps that's too pointed. I don't mean to reflect in a judgmental way on other members of this place, the male members, but I think there's a question for everybody here to ask themselves about it.

I'm pleased that at least the matter has been resolved when we pass this motion and we have this committee and its remit at least specifically includes 'gender-based violence' in its title. That's one tiny step forward, but it's far from enough. It's far from enough. Every member here should be asking themselves what more should be done to make genuine progress here, to give it the advocacy it needs, to give it the focus it needs, to give it the parliamentary attention it needs. The people who haven't gotten up to speak on this and who didn't put their hand up for the committee that was proposed should particularly have a good hard think about that.