

Speaker; Ms Libby Mettam; Ms Merome Beard; Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Deputy Speaker; Ms Sabine Winton; Ms Meredith Hammat; Mr John Quigley

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**FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**

*Matter of Public Interest*

**THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts)** informed the Assembly that she was in receipt within the prescribed time of a letter from the Leader of the Liberal Party seeking to debate a matter of public interest.

[In compliance with standing orders, at least five members rose in their places.]

**MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party)** [2.56 pm]: I move —

That this house calls upon the WA Labor government to recognise its failure to keep Western Australians safe and its failure to adequately resource systems that deter perpetrators of domestic violence.

The opposition rises with some very real concern when speaking to this motion and what it represents. It has been very difficult to see the harrowing cases on television and in the newspapers over the last several months. As members of Parliament, we are all very aware of the scourge of domestic violence across our communities. In the past few months we have learnt of the tragic deaths of Tiffany Woodley, Georgia Lyall and Emmerich Lasakar. Each case is as tragic as the last and equally difficult to grasp. How is it that young women, in some cases mums, could be subjected to such violence and attacked in their home, a place in which they should be entitled to feel safe?

Just over a week ago, an emergency summit was called at the urgency of advocates in this space from the WA Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing. I am sure that those who know Alison Evans and those involved in this summit know that what was organised and put together certainly was an unprecedented step in terms of advocacy. They felt they had no option but to do that. It is good that we saw the Premier and Deputy Premier attend, along with a number of other government ministers. That certainly was an important step. We heard from victims, survivors and families who shared their harrowing stories. They were desperate to be heard and are desperate to get some help.

We heard at the summit the case of Lynn Cannon. Her murder became front and centre and it certainly rocked the Western Australian community. Ms Cannon was murdered in December by her jealous ex-husband after he lured her to his home to sign some paperwork. The mother of two was stabbed to death, leaving behind grieving sisters and loving sons. I asked a question about this case in Parliament today. Her killer has since been sentenced to life in prison with a non-parole period of 19 years. One of the hardest details to grapple with, obviously apart from the torment and tragedy of what occurred, is to understand why the 000 calls were not made more of a priority. That was the concern raised by Lynn's sister to me. I had the privilege of meeting Jacqui yesterday and her other sisters as well. Jacqui Darley raised this matter. It took police more than 60 minutes to respond to the 000 calls for help because her ordeal had been downgraded from a level 2 priority to a level 3 priority, as it was not deemed an imminent risk. I have seen a copy of the transcript of the 000 call of that fateful evening. What was made clear in the call by Lynn's other sister, Christine, and what was expressed in the 000 call, is that the perpetrator had already threatened Lynn with a weapon earlier that day and he was still clearly a risk. I will read an excerpt of that call from 7.30 that night. Christine states —

**CH** No one's heard from her from — since 3.30. Her phone's been, um, you know when you can see when they're last active? That's been taken off, she's not answering any calls or messages.

It goes on —

**CH** So I'm really concerned for her now. Because he rocked up with a weapon this morning.

**CO1** ... What did he have in his hands?

**CH** A knife.

...

**CO1** ... And so — and then she had to go to his house today?

**CH** To drop off forms ... yeah.

...

**CH** ... Even her sons haven't heard from her.

...

**CH** It's out of character for my sister.

The concern, and the reason that her family is calling for a change with Lynn's law, is that they cannot understand how this call was downgraded from category 2 to category 3. We know that the police are under-resourced. We have asked questions this place. The FDV unit has less now than last year and fewer police now than it had two years ago. This call was not responded to even within the priority 3 time. It still missed the hour for a priority 3 category, which raises real question about the resources that this government has given to respond to such priorities. The

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police commissioner met with Lynn's sisters and has accepted that she had been let down. He met with Jacqui. They appreciate that there were six units out that evening and that they were under incredible pressure, but they have real concerns about how this call could have been, or should have been, better prioritised.

They have some outstanding questions. They raised the question about why administrative paperwork on other callouts had been prioritised ahead of urgently addressing or responding to Lynn. They also asked very respectfully why officers were dedicated to the provision of a death certificate of an elderly person who had passed away in hospital and was prioritised ahead of her sister who was fighting for her life. Dealing with the death certificate allegedly occurred at a hospital between 6.30 pm and 10.30 pm while Lynn was fighting for her life. They even asked why, after this call was downgraded to a priority 3 category, it was still not responded to in time. Now they want the law changed to ensure that all 000 calls involving a weapon and threats to life are given priority 1 or 2 and for it to be named Lynn's law. I trust the government is giving that serious consideration. I asked the Premier a question about that in Parliament today.

The case of Georgia Lyall and early parole is another case in which a Western Australian woman was let down by the murder of Georgia Lyall, who was killed by an ex-partner after he had been released early from prison. This former bikie nominee was serving a seven-year sentence for abducting, beating and torturing another person over a 13-hour period, yet somehow the Western Australian Prisoners Review Board decided to let someone capable of such terrifying and horrific acts out two years early because he had completed some voluntary programs. I have spoken to people associated with this individual about other people whom he has terrorised, and they cannot believe or understand how on earth this individual could be deemed fit to be let out two years early. How on earth was a former bikie nominee who carried out such heinous and premeditated acts, and there were others, be deemed suitable for early release?

We heard today another re-announcement from the Cook Labor government about the gun reforms that have been talked about for 18 months. That would see anyone issued with a violence restraining order automatically barred from owning a gun in a major new addition to what was called the Cook Labor government's rewrite of the Firearms Act. That provision would attach to all violent thugs, according to the news reports and press release, who are convicted of a serious offence. It was reported that the police minister said the law is aimed at disarming people, including DV perpetrators who had shown that they were not fit have a firearms licence. The Labor government has talked about this, as I have stated, for 18 months, but it would not have made a difference for people like Luke Noormets, who shot Georgia Lyall, because he did not have a gun licence; he had an illegal firearm. The very real concern is why he was let out of jail and how on earth he was given such an early pass, given that he is such a monster. I question the sincerity of today's announcement. We have real questions about what the government has delivered in this space. We have heard much talk about what this government will do, but there are very real concerns about what is happening on the ground. That is why Alison Evans took such an extraordinary step and the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing called for the recent summit.

The WA Police Force receives calls for help every four minutes. On average, a woman is killed by an intimate partner every 10 days in Australia. The government has trialled initiatives such as the GPS tracking system for high-risk offenders who have breached family violence restraining orders, which may have made a difference in one or more of these cases. We are really keen to understand how this GPS trial worked and whether it was successful, given that it set out to achieve the very worthy goal of tracking our most violent offenders. If we can track cows, we should be able to track these heinous violent offenders when they breach their violence restraining orders. They are not my words; they are the words of many who operate in this space.

It is extraordinary that the government is none the wiser. I asked the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence questions in this place about the outcome of this important two-year trial, which was meant to track 100 high-risk offenders by GPS. It finished in August last year. The opposition is very keen to hear about the outcome of that trial and, if it was successful, why it is not continuing. We have been told that the report may be finished at the end of this year. The Premier indicated something different today. I hope we can get some clarity from the government when it responds to this MPI. The real questions are: Where is the urgency? Where is the priority? We are talking about some of the most violent offenders who have breached violence restraining orders. It was a very important trial. The fact that this government cannot explain the outcome of that trial is deeply disturbing and cold comfort to the families of victims and the broader community, which has been and continues to be rocked by the actions of these heinous offenders. For the Premier to suggest that the GPS tracking trial is somehow not part of the minister's area of responsibility is certainly a stretch.

I asked questions in this place today relating to coercive control legislation. We understand that the work was completed in July last year. The period for consultation, resulting in the discussion paper, has closed, and we are yet to see the outcome of that. Obviously it was very disturbing to be made aware of that vision of Peta Robinson, who was bashed and physically violated by her partner, but was then harassed and threatened when he was behind bars—when the perpetrator was in prison. That raises real questions about what this government is doing and the level to which it is

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taking these matters seriously. It was harrowing enough to see the CCTV vision on Channel Seven and what Peta Robinson had been through. The fact that ministers in this place saw that vision last year and the perpetrator is still harassing Peta from behind bars illustrates that this government has certainly dropped the ball when it comes to family and domestic violence. Today's announcement was a re-announcement and reflects the fact that this government is scrambling. It is very clear that it has a long way to go when it comes to keeping people safe from perpetrators.

**Ms S.F. McGurk:** How many times have you spoken on domestic violence in this place?

**Ms L. METTAM:** We are dealing with substantive issues here. You are a failed minister.

Several members interjected.

**Ms L. METTAM:** I will not respond to petty interjections. We hope that we will get some clarity when the government responds and that it will provide information on the outcome of the GPS trial and when we will see a review of the decision relating to the monster Noormets, and some answers relating to Lyn's law and a range of other matters in response to that very important summit. Other members would like to speak on this topic.

**MS M. BEARD (North West Central)** [3.14 pm]: I rise to support this motion. I acknowledge and I hear the arguments that the member for Vasse put forward. The recent summit was a very important step in the right direction, and I welcome that. We are facing a dire situation, but we have issues to address and a long pathway to go down before we get to real and positive outcomes to make an absolute change to people's behaviour. I acknowledge who did what eight years ago and who did not, but this is a really important issue that we need to work on collaboratively. We have to highlight some of the deficits and maybe take some of those on board. At the end of the day, we want positive outcomes. I will take a look at this issue from a regional perspective. One initiative that I have found to be a positive step forward was the 16 Days in WA campaign to stop violence against women. It was definitely another positive step forward.

The first ever Red Shoes Australia installation, which provided a visual representation of the women who have lost their lives to gender-based violence in Australia, was a stark reminder of the need for continued reform around this critical issue and the need for a multipronged approach towards domestic violence across communities and across the regions.

I believe that education is one of the catalysts for change. The Premier touched on that today, with the respectful relationships teaching support program. It highlights the importance of basically starting to educate people from the age of zero onwards. Education on this issue should not stop.

We also need to continue to bring this issue to the media. If people are reading about it and understand the issues, they will be highlighted as we travel forward. To change the culture will be significant. One of the things that springs to my mind is keeping it at the top of people's minds. When we think back to the Marlboro tobacco ads, smoking was cool. Then we saw the transition and the terrible ads showing people's lungs being squeezed. Over time I have noticed, even in my family, that none of my children smoke. It may be coincidental but I believe that that is a product of sticking at that anti-smoking campaign. When talking about campaigns, we have a long journey ahead of us. The example I used was run for over 40 years. I believe it had a significant impact.

I also believe that education needs to start early and it needs to continue. It is difficult to change depending on where each child is in their journey. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Andrea Musulin, the CEO of Carnarvon Family Support Services, a long-time dedicated advocate and champion of child protection and author of a book that was launched by the minister in Carnarvon last week called *Keeping Kids Safe in Carnarvon*. I am sure the minister can attest to the fact that it is a great initiative to help kids feel safe. It can also be applied to domestic violence. The book was one of Andrea's long-term goals, which has resulted in a valuable resource to help teach children about protective behaviours. I believe that education is the key to change. With decades of experience, I had conversations with Andrea as soon as she finished this book about her hope to develop another book specifically relating to domestic violence and aimed at children aged four to 10. That would be another resource that could be used in conjunction with this book. We need to keep looking at and reaching for initiatives like this. Andrea also oversees the women's refuge in Carnarvon. I do not know whether anybody has been there, but it is a fabulous facility and is very well run. It is full; it has no capacity. It is the only one in the Gascoyne, which highlights an enormous gap in the large region that I represent and the desperate need for facilities and services across the regions—safe sanctuaries for people involved in domestic violence.

The other thing that is in deficit is transitional housing. In small towns and small communities, when someone transitions out of a women's refuge, often the only place for them to go is back into the community. No transitional housing is available for those people to allow them to transition back to some form of normality. Sometimes, they need to return to their home, which starts the cycle again. The need for transitional housing is exacerbated in regional towns with small populations as the options are often limited. It is a sleeping issue throughout our region. I went to Tom Price some time ago and chatted to the police officers there. When asked what was on their radar and what were some of their big issues, they raised the issue of domestic violence. Those issues are occurring in that town

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in the very north of the state. Domestic violence was their top priority at that time; it was their top call-out. Women's refuges are at near capacity and there are additional issues, such as victims not being able to take all their children to safe houses or being reluctant to leave their pets. We have a way to go to work through this at a state level, particularly as we move further away from the metropolitan area.

The shortage of crisis accommodation in Western Australia was highlighted in the inquiry into the funding of homelessness services. The committee heard evidence about the shortage of crisis and transitional accommodation throughout the state. We know that we have an accommodation issue in this state for lots of reasons, but refuges and crisis accommodation centres are at capacity and turning women and children away. We need to try to alleviate that as a priority, if we are to stem the flow of tragedies.

Finding 19 states —

There is an urgent need for more crisis and transitional accommodation in Western Australia.

Coupled with that was the recommendation on the need for the WA government to “fund more 24/7 crisis services offering engagement and referral”. Referral is important. We need safe spaces. Children in a lot of towns in my electorate need to escape these situations. They need somewhere to go after hours—often, in the early hours of the morning. Safe spaces are a key part of this puzzle, as are some of the wraparound services that I have mentioned. We need to remember that domestic violence is not just an issue that women are facing. In my area, a large number of men are subjected to domestic violence. I think that is the greatest gap, particularly in regional areas. There is a drug and alcohol centre in Carnarvon. I rang it one Tuesday but it is not open on Tuesdays. These are some of the challenges that I have experienced. I believe we could slowly close that gap if resources and wraparound services were provided. Only one facility operates in the region for women and I do not know of any for men who suffer domestic violence. Night safe spaces are extremely important in regional areas to provide a place for at least children to escape to. Referral and follow-up services will be crucial in changing behaviour and addressing the cultural change that needs to happen.

In summary, we all know that domestic violence is very complex and that it will take a multipronged approach to make change. There is a raft of issues. Referral and wraparound services, and facilities to which people can escape so that they feel safe, are crucial.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition)** [3.23 pm]: I will make a very brief contribution to this motion calling on the Western Australian Labor government to recognise its failure in keeping Western Australians safe and adequately resourcing systems that deter perpetrators of domestic violence. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Today, the Premier was asked several questions about whether he recognised that the situation in 2017 was a crisis, as described by his predecessor, with 32 597 cases. The statistics have since gone through the roof; they have increased exponentially in recent times. All this is happening at a time when the government is awash with cash. Money is flowing into the coffers, yet a pittance is being spent on the prevention of this insidious crime that is perpetrated not just on women but in the main on women, as the member for North West Central pointed out.

I commend the member for Vasse for her advocacy in this matter. She outlined the cases that led to the summit being organised. The organisers brought people together because they could see that the government needed to be brought to account. The member for Vasse has been fearless in her advocacy of these issues in the chamber. It is disappointing that the government does not take the opportunity to outline how it is going to make a material difference.

**Ms S.F. McGurk** interjected.

*Point of Order*

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** The minister will have ample opportunity to respond. I cannot hear the Leader of the Opposition for the interjections from the minister.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Cottesloe; I will not uphold the point of order. Leader of the House and Treasurer, if you could keep your conversation down a little. Treasurer and Leader of the House! Thank you; if you could just keep your conversation down a little. It is getting distracting, especially for Hansard. There is no point of order. The opposition has nearly finished and the government will have the opportunity to respond. Carry on, Leader of the Opposition.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I thank the Deputy Speaker for his protection.

The member for Vasse outlined not only some of the serious matters that were recently in the press, but also that there has been a multilayered failure by the government and some government agencies to ensure that domestic violence is taken seriously enough. We are in the seventh year of this Labor government. It is distressing that the standard response from the government when questioned about the efficacy of any of its programs is to denigrate the previous government. We are now in the seventh year of this government. How many more years will it take

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before it is able to make some sort of impact on the rising scourge of family and domestic violence in this state? How will this be turned around? So far, the government has not been able to demonstrate that any of its programs have had any effect on reducing the number of incidents or in providing some of the services that people need.

The member for North West Central spoke about some regional areas. There is a paucity of services in my electorate. Very little is available for people in small communities. Often, those communities also have a housing shortage and it is very difficult for people to seek help and find somewhere safe to live away from an abusive relationship. That issue is raised with me, as a member of Parliament, in many contexts in communities right across my electorate, and I am sure it is happening across many other areas. We need to take this much more seriously. We need the government to start putting programs in place that will make a difference, instead of making announcements about programs that might make a difference.

**MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence)** [3.28 pm]: I strongly oppose the motion and the arguments that we have heard so far this afternoon. However, I found the contribution of the member for North West Central on this matter really refreshing. It was a positive contribution that was full of suggestions and an acknowledgement of the complex nature of family and domestic violence. I congratulate her on that. It was really great to be in Carnarvon last week to acknowledge some important work that is happening in the member's community that will make a difference. She was right in saying that education has a really important part to play in this very complex issue that has plagued governments for a long time.

If I can, at the end of my speech I will respond to the Leader of the Opposition's assertion, but I want to begin by saying that the member for North West Central's contribution was in stark contrast with that of the Leader of the Liberal Party, who said that the very important taskforce we announced today was spin. The taskforce is not spin. It is a direct response to a summit held on 31 August at which victim-survivors with lived experience and sector peak bodies asked for a taskforce. We have responded within seven working days, demonstrating the priority we continue to place on family and domestic violence, and today we have announced the establishment of a taskforce. Talking about sincerity, suggesting that that is spin is something the Leader of the Liberal Party should really think about. The Premier, the Deputy Premier, a number of cabinet colleagues and I attended the forum of 31 August, where we listened to the experiences of those victim-survivors with lived experience and also the peak bodies. At that summit came a clear message that there needs to be a more connected approach to dealing with what are complex issues. Out of that forum came a number of asks of government. The priority was to establish this taskforce. That is a key piece of work that this government will now do so we can listen to those with lived experience and the experts in the field to assess our significant investment over the last six years and how we can work together to improve it—not only the government's response, but also connecting better together with various community sector organisations that do great work throughout Western Australia.

I am very proud to announce that the taskforce will be co-chaired by Colleen Hayward, AM, a very, very highly regarded Noongar woman who brings great standing and experience to the role of co-chairing an important taskforce that will further guide and support the work that this government does. Through the taskforce we will also undertake to get guidance from the community sector on further investments and improvements we can make to support the important work done by the sector. It is important that we keep listening to it. Since the forum on 31 August, I have had a number of meetings with key leaders of the sector, including Alison and Donna from the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellness, Damian from Stopping Family Violence and others. I assure members that I am very confident that they think I am absolutely sincere in my determination to lead the government's continued response to family and domestic violence.

We have been in government for nearly seven years, and I am proud of the government's record so far on family and domestic violence. I know some on the opposite side do not want us to go back to a previous time, but the fact remains that until 2017 family and domestic violence was not a priority for any previous government. The sector, the experts and I know that family and domestic violence has not just popped up in the last year. The recent incidents that occurred in the few weeks that preceded the forum are absolutely tragic. Again, I want to extend my condolences to the families and loved ones of those women, and also highlight the extraordinary bravery of victim-survivors with lived experience in standing up and advocating. I think they are doing an incredibly important job. To suggest this problem has started now is disingenuous.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members!

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** I remember standing for the seat of Wanneroo in 2017. I remember the platform that the WA Labor government took to that election to make the prevention of family and domestic violence a priority. There was no alternative from the Liberal government. In 2017, the sector and the people who had been doing important work in the area of family and domestic violence for many, many years only saw one alternative that would make family and domestic violence a priority, and that is what we have done. Since coming into office we have invested

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over \$200 million into substantial reforms, whether they are legislative reforms to protect victims and hold perpetrators to account or significant investments in infrastructure. We are the first state government to be serious about primary prevention. All those things have lifted the profile of family and domestic violence so we are now all talking about it. So, yes, we all agree that incidents of family and domestic violence right now are too high, and it is unacceptable and has to change, but we will not apologise for continuing to bring family and domestic violence to the top of the conversation in our community and out into the open. If more women stand up and report, that is a good thing to do.

I turn to the investments we have made in nearly seven years. We have 43 refuges throughout the state, over half of them in regional areas. In this budget we have invested \$18.3 million to give an uplift to 26 refuges. We have 17 family and domestic violence and response teams, which is an interagency response that provides timely interventions to those who have made a police report. We are going ahead with our model of one-stop hubs, with over \$60 million being invested in them. They are a way that women can access the supports they need. Importantly, they also encourage a soft-entry approach so we can reach and support women before there are the tragic circumstances we have witnessed in the last couple of weeks. We have supported more counselling, advocacy and support services for adults and, importantly, for young people who experience family and domestic violence. We are focused on perpetrator interventions, including the residential Breathing Space program and men's behaviour change interventions. We have outreach services, including Safe at Home and other programs that support victim-survivors in the community. Today, we announced an extension of that program into Fitzroy Crossing and Katanning. We do not want women to flee their homes; we want women to be able to stay at home with their children and be safe and to hold perpetrators to account. These are the kinds of programs that we know are working.

I come back to the Leader of the Opposition. I did not get his words directly, but he implied that we have failed over the last six years. By extension, the Leader of the Opposition is saying that somehow \$200 million worth of investment, all those programs, some of which I have highlighted today, all the champions and all the community services that work day in, day out to support women and children are failing. That is what the Leader of the Opposition is saying when he makes that case that the government's investment has been an abject failure and no woman or child in the last seven years has been supported by or benefited from the priority that this government has placed on the prevention of family and domestic violence.

In the last nine months that I have been the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence, it has been my great privilege to meet many staff from community service organisations, whether they work in refuges or primary prevention, support perpetrators or provide counselling to young people. They work day in, day out and feel deeply the tragic circumstances that we experienced in the last few weeks, as does every single person in the community and every single parliamentarian. I caution the Leader of the Liberal Party: this is not a time to score political points; rather, it is a time to come together and enter the debate in a constructive and positive way that values the people behind the government's \$200 million investment and the difference they have made in a positive way to hundreds and thousands of women in the last seven years. That is what she should be doing. Those people are on the front line making a difference day in, day out.

I finish by saying that the taskforce is no spin; it is a genuine commitment by the Cook government to reprioritise and strengthen the work it has done in the last seven years, to listen to the voices of the sector and ensure that all layers of government at the highest level work together to further strengthen system responses, and to provide further support to the extraordinary community services that need to join together to deal with what is a complex issue in our community.

The Premier is right: there is no quick-fix solution. It is a multifaceted problem in our community. There is no place for violence in our community. Women have the fundamental right to feel safe in their home. Women have the fundamental right to expect that their children also feel safe in their home. One death is one too many. It is tragic and it reinforces to all those working in the field and to government that we need to reaffirm our resolve to continue to place the prevention of family and domestic violence as a priority. I implore members opposite to think carefully about their responses because we have done an incredible job with our investment in the last six years. I look forward to working with the taskforce to further strengthen the government's response to further support people facing these challenging violent situations in their homes.

**MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary)** [3.43 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to this debate and to speak in opposition to the motion moved by the Leader of the Liberal Party. There is so much to say, but I know that other members want to have a go so I will keep my comments brief.

The Leader of the Opposition made the point that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. That is absolutely the case here when we compare the proof of the pudding on our side of politics and the work we have done in this policy space with what opposition members delivered when they were in government; it is incredibly stark. In their contributions, those in the corner made comments about how we should not be looking back on the former Liberal-National government's record. I understand why they are ashamed and embarrassed when we do that because the reality is that members opposite did nothing. When they were in government, they had an opportunity

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to put in place processes, programs and financing approaches that might have made a difference—but they did nothing. I am not surprised that they are reticent to have their track record compared with ours. But, of course, it is essential to do so in this debate. They come into the chamber with confected outrage and suggest that this government has not been delivering in the area of family and domestic violence when, of course, we have a multipronged and very successful strategy—I will come to that in a minute—that stands in stark contrast to the wasted years of the Barnett government when those opposite last had the opportunity to turn the dial on this very important issue. I say that because the position I held at that time required that I engage with the Barnett government in an effort to have it put in place fairly minor things that would have made a difference to people who were experiencing family and domestic violence. In response, all I got was a very curt letter suggesting that it was not interested in having a discussion with me about those issues. There was no attempt to engage or put in place programs that would have made a difference. Members opposite can object as much as they like, but it is impossible for them to hide from the fact that they did nothing when they were in government.

In case members think that that was just a particular characteristic of former Barnett government ministers, let us reflect on how the former federal Morrison–Abbott–Turnbull government dealt with this issue when it had an opportunity to do something in the family and domestic violence space. Which federal government implemented 10 days’ family and domestic leave as a minimum standard for all workers?

**Mr S.A. Millman:** Ours.

**Ms M.J. HAMMAT:** That is right; it was the federal Albanese Labor government. For years, groups actively sought that measure from government, but there was no progress at all under the coalition government. There has been incredibly good progress with a Labor government in power. It is true in this matter as well.

This government has a deliberate program of trying to bring about change and it is having success in doing that. It has a three-pronged approach, including increasing community awareness with things like the 16 Days in WA program, which is now a widely accepted part of the fabric in WA. It has been incredibly successful in raising community awareness. We have a program to protect and support victim–survivors with things like the Naala Djookan Healing Centre in Mirrabooka. Those hubs are being rolled out around the state with soft entry points for people who might be experiencing domestic violence or have questions about their circumstances and need some support. Earlier this year, the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence told this house that Naala Djookan in Mirrabooka has assisted 1 200 people since it opened. It was the innovation of the former Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence to have hubs with many services and soft entry points, and, in Mirrabooka alone, 1 200 people have been assisted, of whom 629 sought help due to family and domestic violence.

We have also held perpetrators to account. We will hear more about that in contributions that will be made shortly. A whole range of innovative programs provide support. In her contribution, the minister referred to the \$200 million that the government has invested. Of course, it is significant to note that the Labor government introduced the first Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence when it was elected in 2017. This Labor government has pursued a whole raft of initiatives that are having an impact in my community in Mirrabooka and right across the state. These initiatives stand in stark contrast to the inaction and wasted years of the former Liberal–National government. It galls me that members opposite come into the chamber with a motion that suggests that our government has not been performing in this area. They need to have a good hard look at themselves and, frankly, do better.

*Amendment to Motion*

**Ms M.J. HAMMAT:** I move —

That all words after “house” be deleted and the following be inserted —

supports the taskforce established today by the Cook Labor government to support victim–survivors and address family and domestic violence in Western Australia.

**MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General)** [3.50 pm]: I would like to speak to the amendment to the motion and, in doing so, fully endorse the comments of the previous speaker, the member for Mirrabooka. The member was quite right when she said there were seven and a half wasted years. I sat there on the opposition’s side of the chamber and I cannot recall any legislation brought forward into the chamber to abate this terrible thing that happens in Western Australia and in Australia of domestic violence, particularly domestic violence fatalities. I attended in the afternoon tea room, the Centenary Room, a presentation by the Ombudsman some years ago detailing deaths from domestic violence. I was horrified to learn that there had been 42 murders in Western Australia and, of them, 22 of them were domestic violence situations. That was in 2015–16. I want to speak directly to the member for Vasse. She said —

We have real questions about what the government has delivered in this space.

Speaker; Ms Libby Mettam; Ms Merome Beard; Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Deputy Speaker; Ms Sabine Winton; Ms Meredith Hammat; Mr John Quigley

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That is, the domestic violence space —

We have heard much talk about what this government will do, but there are very real concerns about what is happening on the ground.

Member, the proof is in the eating of the pudding. We have introduced a whole raft of bills, enactments and provisions to try to stem this dreadful tragedy of domestic violence, particularly deaths resulting from domestic violence. This includes the criminal offence of suffocation and strangulation, persistent family violence offences, aggravated penalties for offences involving family violence where there are criminal damage threats or deprivation of liberties, and sentencing declarations. Do not forget, member for Vasse, the serious family violence offender declaration. I know the member is only barely interested in this and more interested in what that fossil from Cottesloe has to whisper in her ear. Amendments were made to the Restraining Orders Act and the Evidence Act so that judges have to charge juries. I realise that the member for Vasse will not take in any of this because it will not be in her headline. Other amendments have been made as well, including an amendment to the Evidence Act following the conviction of Jody Gore for murder, so that judges will have to instruct juries at the request of the defence counsel, the prosecution or of their own motion to instruct juries on the ongoing effects of family violence.

The Ombudsman did not stop reporting on deaths from family violence in 2016–17. He kept on studying this tragedy. I realise that the member for Vasse's intense talks with the member for Cottesloe during this speech would have distracted her from Ombudsman's report of 2021–22, *Family and domestic violence fatality review*. I will table page 135 of the report so we have the years. A chart is produced, which shows a diminishing occurrence of murder from domestic violence. I will go back to when the Liberals were in government, in 2012–13. There were 20 domestic violence murders. In 2013–14, there were 15; in 2014–15, there were 16; and in 2015–16, there were 22 murders from domestic violence according to the Ombudsman's report. The year after we came into government, there were 17. Then we started bringing in the legislation we have talked about. There has been a continuing decline. One murder is too many but as to the member for Vasse's proposition that she has real questions about what the government has delivered in this space, I will come back to the legislative amendments presently. I want to table page 135 from the report, which shows 17 murders from domestic violence in our first year of office, 15 in our second, nine in 2021 and nine in 2022. We have well over halved the incidence of murder in domestic violence circumstances since we have been in government and the Liberal Party did nothing for eight years. For eight years, over the Leader of the Liberal Party's term of government, up to 70 people—mainly women—were murdered in domestic violence settings, which could have been stemmed. The proof is in the pudding on page 135. I table that page.

[See paper [2220](#).]

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** On page 135, it is nine followed by nine the next year. That is the answer to the member for Vasse's question. We have real answers. They are not from the Attorney General, not from Labor but from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations. He has given the member the answers and I have tabled the necessary page of his report. I urge the member to read the rest of the report. What have we done? Does the Leader of the Liberal Party not remember Damian Jones who was killed by the woman he had been abusing for 20 years, Jody Gore? It was on trial that we learnt she had been beaten, abused and suffered injuries over 20 years, yet the state of the law at the time was very narrow on the direction of a jury as to the effect of that. What did the former government do about murders in the DV setting or about this woman's circumstance? She had been beaten for 20 years and eventually retaliated against her abuser by stabbing him in self-defence. She got life in jail for that. What did the former government do about it? Nothing—absolutely nothing! When we came to office and I was given the responsibility of being the Attorney General, for the first time ever in Western Australia, we wiped out the sentence and returned Jody to her country in Kununurra. Do not ask me questions about what Labor has done! We have taken real steps that are in the Ombudsman's report. Have a look at the Ombudsman's report. I encourage the member to read the whole report and she will see what we are doing. We will not give up! We will not give up until we reduce the number further and further. I acknowledge the member for North West Central, who said we are doing something for the regions, but may I say to the member that the sale of full-strength alcohol in the regions is a driver of domestic violence. There is no doubt about that. We have seen what June Oscar did by reducing the sale of full-strength alcohol in Fitzroy and Halls. There was a dramatic decline in domestic violence.

*Division*

Amendment put and a division taken, the Deputy Speaker casting his vote with the ayes, with the following result —

**Extract from *Hansard***  
[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 12 September 2023]  
p4440a-4447a

Speaker; Ms Libby Mettam; Ms Merome Beard; Mr Shane Love; Dr David Honey; Deputy Speaker; Ms Sabine Winton; Ms Meredith Hammat; Mr John Quigley

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Ayes (45)

Mr S.N. Aubrey	Ms E.L. Hamilton	Mr D.R. Michael	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Mr G. Baker	Ms M.J. Hammat	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Dr K. Stratton
Ms L.L. Baker	Mr T.J. Healy	Mr S.A. Millman	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Ms H.M. Beazley	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Mr D.A. Templeman
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr H.T. Jones	Ms L.A. Munday	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Ms C.M. Tonkin
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Ms E.J. Kelsbie	Mr S.J. Price	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms C.M. Collins	Ms A.E. Kent	Mr D.T. Punch	Ms S.E. Winton
Ms L. Dalton	Dr J. Krishnan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Ms C.M. Rowe ( <i>Teller</i> )
Ms D.G. D'Anna	Mr P. Lilburne	Ms R. Saffioti	
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mrs M.R. Marshall	Mr D.A.E. Scaife	
Ms K.E. Giddens	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms J.J. Shaw	

Noes (5)

Ms M.J. Davies	Mr R.S. Love	Ms M. Beard ( <i>Teller</i> )
Dr D.J. Honey	Ms L. Mettam	

Amendment thus passed.

*Motion, as Amended*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

Question put and passed.