

Hon Sandra Carr; Hon Nick Goiran; Hon Samantha Rowe; Hon Jackie Jarvis; Hon Dr Brian Walker; Hon Ayor Makur Chuot; Hon Wilson Tucker; Hon Kyle McGinn; Hon Martin Aldridge

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — AWARENESS

Motion

HON SANDRA CARR (Agricultural) [1.07 pm]: I move —

That this house notes —

- (a) the public interest that has been generated from the recently aired *See What You Made Me Do* television series aired on SBS about people's experiences of family and domestic violence; and
- (b) the efforts of the McGowan government to address this issue in the community through a significant increase in funding, awareness and legislative reform.

In the foreword to her book *On Reckoning*, Amy Remeikis writes —

To anyone who carries the cloak of trauma with them—we see you, and we believe you. You didn't deserve any of it and you didn't do anything wrong. And you're not alone.

It is strange, is it not, that we must make such statements to those who are survivors of family and domestic violence. Surely, that should be our default position. Surely, that should be our starting point. We have a problem with family and domestic and sexual violence in Western Australia. It is an issue throughout our state, in our cities and suburbs and across our regional rural and remote communities. It is little wonder that women across the state and indeed the country are angry. We are angry and we are frustrated and we have had enough. As young Australian Brittany Higgins shared at the March 4 Justice —

I watched as people hid behind throwaway phrases like due process and presumption of innocence while failing to acknowledge how the justice system is notoriously stacked against victims of sexual crime.

It is little wonder that women have had enough. It is little wonder that women are marching for justice. During that speech Higgins also noted —

I am cognisant of all the women who continue to live in silence;

The questions we must ask are: Why the silence and invisibility? Why are women and children made to disappear into their trauma? Why does a young woman have to campaign for women to speak or to let them speak? Why are we silencing and gaslighting those who most need our help, support and care? We have a crisis in this state and in this country that is aided and abetted by that silence and our unwillingness to engage, speak out, make noise, ask questions or act on our suspicions. We have a whole community responsibility to address that silence. In Western Australia, two-thirds of assaults in 2021 were related to family and domestic violence, with eight family and domestic violence homicides as of 7 December last year. One in five Western Australian women have reported experiencing partner violence since the age of 15. Violence against women and children has been estimated to cost Australia \$22 billion annually. Family and domestic violence is also the leading cause of homelessness for women and children. Aboriginal women and children experience family violence at a disproportionately high rate, with Aboriginal women 32 times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to be hospitalised from family violence. The National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey found that one in five Australians believe family and domestic violence is a normal reaction to stress and that, sometimes, a woman can make a man so angry that he can hit her without meaning to. One in three Australians believe that if a woman does not leave her abusive partner, then she is responsible for the ensuing violence. Two in five Australians would not know where to go to get outside help if experiencing domestic violence.

We must ask ourselves: What have we consistently done wrong? What are we continuing to do wrong that is causing such horrifying statistics? Statistics are not people. Statistics do not show us blood and bruises. They do not show us the pain and trauma and suffering of everyday people. It is significant that the McGowan government, as part of its response, has appointed Western Australia's first dedicated Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence. The McGowan government has taken unprecedented action to address this issue across the state by investing an additional \$126 million since coming into government, but we still have a long way to go. Although we have invested \$60 million to boost services and help prevent family and domestic violence, we have also launched the *Path to safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020–2030*. The McGowan government's new strategy to prevent family and domestic violence across Western Australia is a long-term vision to enable people to live free from domestic violence. It sets a clear, whole-of-government community plan for reducing and responding to family and domestic violence over the next decade. It is investing \$14.2 million in a law reform package, \$7.3 million to boost prevention of family and domestic violence and \$4 million in supporting survivors' initiatives.

This is a reflection of the groundswell of anger and an increasing demand for change. There has to be change because women are suffering. Women are being harmed, survivors are self-harming, and women are dying in this country,

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and that has been enabled by our inaction and failure to see our personal responsibility to protect our women and children. It is well and truly time for us to take a deep, painful and uncomfortable look into our collective socialisation and ask and answer the questions with brutal, unflinching honesty. Why? Why do these conditions remain and what can we do to help? While women stood outside the Australian Parliament, inside, the current Prime Minister of Australia said that they were lucky because in other countries, such protests would have been met with bullets—that is, met with violence. When the bar is so very low that women should be thankful that they are not being shot and killed for seeking their fundamental right to safety, it seems safe to say that we have a serious problem. But, in fact, it is not even safe to say that because when family and domestic violence and sexual violence is addressed and discussed in the media, survivors tell us that the chance of them becoming at a greater risk of harm increases—perpetrators become angered and the likelihood of them experiencing greater suffering increases. After all, the place in which women and children are least safe is in their own homes. With the proliferation of technology, this has become even more the case as victims find themselves monitored, manipulated and controlled in ways that are readily enabled by technology. Those who hold power are using media and technology to serve their own nefarious ends. To the Prime Minister, with all due respect, I will say that women are being met with bullets—with violence, with abuse, with sexual assault, and with coercive control. Women are dying. Women and children are being murdered, beaten, raped, groomed and assaulted every single day in this country, so do not tell us we are lucky. Do not tell us about your cosy, clarifying chats that you have had in the comfort of your own home while women and children in this country continue to suffer at the hands of perpetrators.

We have a culture that is steeped in the fetid stench of entitlement and proprietary rights. Violence, power and control place our community at risk every day. These rights—this entitlement to power and complete control over the lives of women and children—is revealed in gut-wrenching detail in Jess Hill’s *See What You Made Me Do*. It lays bare—for all who could stand to watch it—the horrifying experience of women and children each and every day in this country. Embedded in the title of Hill’s book and subsequent documentary series is the sinister victim blaming that underlies the problem—what “you” made me do. The insidious questioning and prevalent undermining of survivors is a significant and ongoing contributor to the problem. Remeikis’ *On Reckoning* asks —

Ever notice how you never hear he said/she said about any other crime? ... No-one has ever characterised a burglary as they said/they said. The only time the discourse ever pits two stories against each other is when a woman raises an allegation against a man.

The National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey in 2017 found there was a declining understanding of what constitutes violence against women. Alarming, this is particularly the case in the 16 to 24 male age group. This tells us in no uncertain terms that we are failing our young men. If, as a result of our failings, our young men inevitably commit the crimes that we failed to teach them were wrong, what then? At what point do we accept our social and community responsibility to be part of the prevention of family and domestic violence and sexual assault?

The McGowan government is working to address this. We have begun, although it must be acknowledged that there is still much to be done in primary prevention. Current initiatives include a \$7.3 million boost to primary prevention of family and domestic violence. Primary prevention is expected to have the greatest long-term impact on reducing the rates of family and domestic violence. We are implementing the WA respectful relationships teaching support program to teach students about positive and respectful relationships from a young age and help prevent domestic violence before it starts. As a result of a 2017 McGowan government election commitment, the respectful relationships teaching support program was introduced in schools in 2019. In 2021, we committed to an additional \$1.3 million to expand this program to 12 additional schools each year over the next four years, starting in July 2022. This will give a total of 128 schools the opportunity to participate. We will also expand the respectful relationship approaches to sport and recreational clubs.

These are all appropriate steps to be taken to respond to the family and domestic violence crisis. We are responding to what the data and the research tells us. Notably, in legislative reform, one of the key changes is a new, specific criminal offence for suffocation and strangulation, which is an important risk factor in the context of family violence. Research tells us that when a female has been the victim of strangulation, she is seven times more likely to be the victim of homicide. Moreover, the McGowan government takes the issue of sexual harassment and assault extremely seriously. As a government, we are cognisant that women face an unacceptable and disproportionate risk of sexual violence. All women and girls deserve a life free from violence and assault. Protecting women and girls against violence, discrimination and harassment in their homes, their workplaces and their communities is a priority for the McGowan government. Western Australia has one of the highest rates of sexual assault in Australia, with the number of victims of sexual assault recorded having increased by 10 per cent from 2019 to 2020—the highest it has been in 28 years. It is clear that we have a crisis. Former Australian of the Year Grace Tame, and Brittany Higgins, and of course the many revelations about the culture of our Parliaments and those who serve within them, have drawn

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attention to these significant problems. As current news makes us painfully aware, women and children from all walks of life are at risk; no one, it seems, is spared.

Last year, the Minister for Women's Interests, the Attorney General and the Minister for Health made a joint commitment to commission Western Australia's first sexual violence prevention strategy, *Path to safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020–2030*. A whole-of-government approach is needed to address this devastating issue in our communities and to support the prevention of sexual violence. The strategy will be victim-centred and focused on making sure we have the right supports in place for victims; identifying potential barriers to reporting; and holding perpetrators to account. Although sexual violence impacts women in greater numbers and the overwhelming number of perpetrators are male, the strategy will adopt a broad lens and look at the impacts of sexual violence on boys, men and the LGBTQIA+ community.

To complement the strategy, earlier this month the Attorney General and the Minister for Women's Interests announced two major reviews of Western Australia's sexual assault laws. The state government recognises the need to improve our laws and processes to assist victims to get justice, and we are committed to making that happen. The reviews will be concurrent and complementary, to examine issues relating to sexual offending. The Law Reform Commission of Western Australia has been tasked with reviewing the sexual offence laws contained in the Criminal Code and providing advice on possible amendments to enhance and update these provisions. This will include considering whether the concept of affirmative consent should be reflected in the legislation, how mistakes and knowledge of consent should be dealt with under the law, and the factors that might invalidate consent, such as coercion, fraud or deception—for example, through “stealthing”—and whether “special verdicts” should be used. The Department of Justice, through the Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime, will undertake a separate project to examine the end-to-end criminal justice process for victims of sexual offending, from reporting an offence, to the release from custody of the offender.

Last year, the McGowan government passed legislation to expand the mandatory reporting requirements to include ministers of religion, early childhood workers, out-of-home-care workers, registered psychologists, school counsellors and youth justice workers. The Children and Community Services Act 2021 implements recommendations of the final report of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*. The safety of children is at the heart of the mandatory reporting reforms, which will better protect children by increasing by an estimated 55 000 reporters the number of people who will be legally required to report child sexual abuse. The extension of mandatory reporting laws to ministers of religion and a number of other professions will send a clear message that child safety must always be paramount. Child sexual abuse reforms advocates like Grace Tame have congratulated the government on implementing those important reforms. As Ms Tame noted, “this is what understanding and progress looks like.”

I would also like to take this moment to recognise the establishment of the Grace Tame Foundation. This is a not-for-profit philanthropic organisation established by the 2021 Australian of the Year, Grace Tame, to campaign for and help fund initiatives that work to prevent and respond to sexual abuse of children and others. This is particularly important, because child sexual abuse is intrinsically linked to family and domestic violence. Statistics tell us that one in five children experience sexual abuse. The Grace Tame Foundation aims to ensure that the Australian government and the governments of states and territories take appropriate action by enacting laws, delivering educational programs, and encouraging social behaviours. It also promotes attitudes that will fulfil obligations to ensure that the right of children to be safe no matter where they are, as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Finally, I would like to add my voice to the collective disgust that has been expressed towards those who would release “that image” of a young Grace Tame in an attempt to undermine her. As Ms Tame noted, trauma responses are many and varied —

“It can be ugly. It can look like drugs. Like self-harm, skipping school, getting impulsive tattoos and all kinds of other unconscious self-destructive maladaptive coping mechanisms. ... Whilst I do not seek to glorify, sanitise or normalise any of these things, I also do not seek to shame or judge survivors for ANY of their choices.”

I would like to add to that a recent story. I guess the addition is that it can also look like suicide. I send my condolences on the recent loss of a child sexual abuse survivor—a friend of mine lost a family member to suicide after years of trauma; it just became too much for that young person.

I commend Ms Tame for one again taking the opportunity to educate, even when she is being attacked in such a cruel and cowardly manner. Her strength in the face of such vile and cruel actions is both breathtaking and humbling.

I will end where I began, by reading the words of Amy Remeikis —

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To anyone who carries the cloak of trauma with them—we see you, and we believe you. You didn’t deserve any of it and you didn’t do anything wrong. And you’re not alone.”

HON NICK GOIRAN (South Metropolitan) [1.25 pm]: I rise on behalf of the opposition to contribute to the motion that has been moved by Hon Sandra Carr. I thank the honourable member for giving notice of this motion and moving it. I note that the motion seeks that the house do two things. The first is to note a recently televised series. The second is to note the efforts of the state government on the broader issue of the prevention of family and domestic violence. I also want to acknowledge the honourable member’s comment in her contribution that we still have a long way to go and associate myself very much with that sentiment.

With respect to the television series, and, indeed, also the book to which the member referred, it is confronting. It highlights the sickening and devastating impact of family and domestic violence, in particular coercive control. It is quite appropriate that the honourable member has brought that to our attention.

I hasten to add at this point that it is also very important that this house does a number of other things this afternoon. That includes noting the continuing and unacceptable toll that family and domestic violence has on women, men and children. That certainly was covered by the honourable member in introducing the motion. It would be unfortunate if we were to pass this motion this afternoon without also thanking the police and the people who work in counselling and support services for those who experience family and domestic violence. That includes those people who provide perpetrator rehabilitation programs. On behalf of the opposition, I want to thank those people who journey alongside survivors of family and domestic violence and those who have, or who are, rehabilitating themselves.

In preparation for today, I have had the opportunity to look at some of the statistics provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In the last reporting period, 2020–2021, family and domestic violence offenders accounted for 21 per cent of all offenders in our state who were proceeded against. That is, the rate was 319 family and domestic violence offenders per 100 000 persons. In Western Australia, an act intended to cause injury was the most common principal family and domestic offence. It accounted for nearly half the offences, at just short of 48 per cent.

It probably would not surprise the honourable members here today that most of the family and domestic violence offenders were male, comprising some 83 per cent, and 17 per cent of the offenders were female. The statistics indicate that there were 534 male family and domestic violence offenders per 100 000 and 107 female family and domestic violence offenders per 100 000. I do not know about other members, but sometimes these statistics roll off the tongue, but it is difficult to actually comprehend what that means in practice, particularly when we are talking in the realm of “per 100 000”. I think it is a little bit easier to understand the figures for female family and domestic violence offenders as one in 1 000 and for male family and domestic violence offenders as five in 1 000. For every 1 000 people we know, five men and one female would be a family and domestic violence offender.

The Western Australia Police Force’s most recent annual report also tells us at page 7 that the number of family and domestic violence reports was 19.3 per cent above the five-year average. For reasons that are not necessarily analysed or articulated during that reporting period of the last financial year, we saw a nearly 20 per cent increase in the number of reports of family violence.

It is also instructive to look at the Department of Communities’ last annual report. At page 132, it indicates that 15 127 cases were supported by a community sector organisation funded by the department. Earlier in the report at page 9, it refers to the government spending \$69 million on preventing and responding to family and domestic violence in the reporting period. Interestingly, elsewhere at page 18, it assesses the average cost at \$4 614. I think that is something that the Department of Communities needs to look at, because it has simply applied 15 000 cases to the \$69 million that was spent. That is probably not the best metric to use, because one would certainly hope that the cost of prevention, which in some respects is a little unknown, would be far greater in quantum than that and consequently the cost of preventing and responding to family and domestic violence per case would be far less than \$4 614.

I note that the government released, albeit belatedly in July 2020, a 10-year family and domestic violence strategy. It will not surprise members to know that I have been critical in the past about the length of time it took for that strategy to be put in place. But we are here now and we have the strategy, and it was released by the government in July 2020. What we do not learn from the department’s most recent annual report is how the government is tracking with this 10-year strategy. It is very important and appropriate that the government formulates and puts together a strategy, but it is also incumbent on the government when it implements a strategy to transparently report on its progress. It is certainly my view that the government has a duty to advise us, if possible this afternoon, what it has done to achieve the items that are set out in the strategy. The *First action plan 2020–2022* is the first stage of the 10-year strategy. I note that the action plan is supposed to be completed by June this year. I will give some examples for members. The first of the actions in the action plan that is to be completed by June 2020 is —

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The COVID-19 Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce will plan and develop actions as part of the National Partnerships Agreement on COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Responses. The Taskforce will consider:

- The needs of women and children experiencing, or at risk of domestic violence.
- Ensuring the visibility and accountability of perpetrators.

The obvious questions are: Has this been done; and, if so, when was it completed? What are the needs of women and children experiencing or at risk of domestic violence that were considered by the task force? How is the visibility and accountability of perpetrators being ensured? Has this task force compiled a report? When will it be tabled?

The second action in the first action plan is —

Track and respond to demand variances that relate to victims and perpetrators of family and domestic violence, as a consequence of COVID-19.

Once again I ask: What have these demand variances been? Did they require a response? How was this data collected?

The third action is —

Implement online Family Violence Restraining Orders and electronic monitoring trial for family and domestic violence offenders as per the provisions of the Family Violence Legislation Reform (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020.

The questions that arise include: What has been the uptake of restraining orders? What are the results of the electronic monitoring trial?

The fourth action says that the government will —

Develop a family and domestic violence dashboard that tracks and reports demand data, to support monitoring and analysis of current and emerging data trends and inform planning.

Has this been done? Who has access to this data board? What are the emerging data trends and how do they inform training?

The fifth action is —

Co-design the Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy with Aboriginal people and communities.

Has this been done? Who was involved in this co-design strategy? How will this strategy be implemented? Will the government table a copy of this strategy?

The sixth action sees the government —

Develop a corporate engagement framework to support a coordinated and strategic approach to seeking investment in family and domestic violence prevention.

What is not known is whether the framework has been completed, who was involved in establishing the framework, how much investment has been secured through this corporate engagement and whether this amount of investment has been quantified.

The seventh action sees the government —

Explore best practice models for engaging and responding to the needs of children and young people impacted by family and domestic violence.

What was the result of this exploration? What are the best practice models for engaging and responding to the needs of children and young people? Where are these best practice models currently in practice?

Keep in mind, President, as I move to the eighth action that these are all matters in the first action plan. It is not to be confused with the 10-year strategy. This is the first action plan that is to be completed by the middle of this year.

The eighth action sees the government —

Establish and monitor service delivery of the new Peel and Kwinana refuge models.

We know that they have been established, but how is the monitoring of the service occurring at these refuges? How is the information informing other decision-making? Perhaps most importantly, what has been the demand on these refuges?

The ninth action sees the government —

Set up and monitor implementation of the two new one-stop family and domestic violence hub pilots.

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The questions that I have include: How many people are passing through the hubs on average every week? What are the key performance measures for these hubs?

The tenth action has the government —

Develop a framework for improving WA's perpetrator response system that considers and integrates the emerging national and international evidence relevant to this work.

Has the framework been developed? What is the recommended approach for improving WA's perpetrator response system? What are the gaps in the existing system that require improving? How does the framework integrate national and international evidence?

The eleventh action has the government —

Support community-led prevention activity and efforts, such as 16 Days in WA—Stop Violence against Women campaign, and draw on established expertise, such as Our Watch, to ensure alignment with good practice in primary prevention.

How is the government measuring this campaign's success? How much money is being spent on this campaign? Is the broader community benefiting from the messaging? What impact are the messages having? Does the messaging extend beyond those who work within the sector and how would we know?

The twelfth action sees the government —

Strengthen approaches to risk management and information sharing by:

- Updating the Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework.

Has this been done? When was it completed? The twelfth action continues —

- Exploring suitable information sharing practices across justice, health and community services.

What are those practices? How is this information being shared? What measures are in place to ensure that this information is being kept private and stored safely? The twelfth action continues —

- Bolstering these practices in the Family and Domestic Violence Response Teams.

What is not readily known is how many of these teams exist, where these teams exist and what measures has the government implemented to achieve this goal? Still on the twelfth action, the government has committed to —

- Introducing a family and domestic violence specific tool ... to identify offender treatment needs in both community and custody settings and designed to inform case management actions and outcomes.

Has the tool been introduced and who is using it? What other jurisdictions are using it? What offender treatment options are currently available in the community and in custody? Are they different? How does the tool inform case management actions and outcomes? How is its effectiveness being measured? This very substantial twelfth action also requires the government to —

- Updating practice in health settings through:
 - a. A state-wide mandatory policy for family and domestic violence screening.

Is the policy in place? Can a copy of the mandatory policy be tabled? What level of stakeholder consultation was done during the policy development? What are the penalties for not adhering to this mandatory policy? That same sub-item on updating the practice in health settings would also see —

- b. Strengthening ante-natal responses to family and domestic violence.

Has this been done; and, if so, how has it been done? Which ante-natal services have received education and response measures? What has been their feedback? The twelfth item concludes with the government —

- c. Developing a family and domestic violence framework for responding to family and domestic violence for all Health Service Providers.

Has that framework been completed? When will this framework be implemented and who was involved in developing this framework? How did they define "all Health Service Providers" and what education on this framework is being offered?

I will conclude my assessment of this by looking at the thirteenth action that sees the government —

Enhance family and domestic violence learning and development by:

- a. Developing a family and domestic violence workforce capability framework across all agencies and services in the sector to improve safe and effective responses to family and domestic violence.

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- b. Implementing the Safe and Together Program model throughout Department of Communities child protection staff.
- c. Identifying opportunities for education and raising awareness of Non-Fatal Strangulation.

Once again, has any of that been done; and, if so, how? In that short period of time I should indicate to members that I am only halfway through the 26 action items, but I think that honourable members get the picture. The government has quite rightly put together a 10-year strategy and also a two-year action plan, which is due to expire in a few months. With respect to merely those 13 action items—half of the matters that are listed—there are a number of questions that the government ought to answer. Although the government has a duty to implement the 10-year strategy, and the opposition has a duty to hold the government to account for the timely and competent implementation of that strategy, what cannot happen is that a document is published at great cost to the taxpayers and then the serious work of the prevention of family and domestic violence is simply kicked into the long grass.

I will conclude with a quote from the book *See What You Made Me Do*. For the benefit of honourable members and also Hansard, the quote begins at page 338. It states —

In the suffocating heat of a Melbourne summer, I met with Jocelyn Bignold, the CEO of McAuley Community Services for Women. There was only one 24-hour crisis shelter for domestic violence victims in Victoria, she told me, and she was in charge of it. As we spoke, Bignold was clearly preoccupied. She had good reason to be: as far as she knew, McAuley would have to close in six months' time, on July 1. The immediate threat to her shelter—and many others around the country—was the expected cancellation of a funding arrangement ...

The quote continues on page 339 —

In January that year, no-one in the sector had been told whether their funding would be renewed. 'I've got nothing to tell me on paper what the plan is for funding services after the 30th of June' said Bignold her eyes flashing with anger.

That experience that has been set out in the book is entirely consistent with the experience of every single government-funded stakeholder that I have met with who has been or is doing work to support those impacted by family and domestic violence. One very substantial step that the government could take to help these organisations is to guarantee their funding so that they do not need to expend as much energy on applying and reapplying for funding. I do not think that those hard working service providers need that uncertainty and nor do the victims and survivors of family and domestic violence for whom these people advocate.

HON SAMANTHA ROWE (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.45 pm]: It is a pleasure to be able to rise this afternoon on behalf of the government to support this motion. Last year, I had the privilege of being the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Women's Interests, Hon Simone McGurk, and to be involved in some of the crucial work that she and our government were doing to support women, children and families experiencing family and domestic violence. Before I move onto part (a) of the motion today, I want to firstly acknowledge and thank Hon Sandra Carr for bringing this motion to the house and also for her very passionate contribution on what is a very important issue for not only Western Australia, but also Australia. I would also like to thank Hon Nick Goiran for his contribution this afternoon. I am sure that many more contributions will be made around the chamber and I look forward to listening to those.

I would like to start with part (a) of the motion on the television series aired on SBS last year that was based on the book by Jess Hill *See What You Made Me Do*. For those members who are not aware, Jess Hill is an author, a journalist and a speaker, particularly on topics around social issues and gendered violence. I have had the opportunity to listen to Jess Hill speak at a Rockingham and Kwinana family and domestic violence conference held in Rockingham last year where I represented the minister. The conference was run by the Lucy Saw Centre Association, South Coastal Health and Community Services and SCALES Community Legal Centre, part of a network of services that look after the south corridor and help support women and children experiencing family and domestic violence. I take this opportunity to thank them collectively for the very important work that they do every single day. Jess Hill presented at that conference via Zoom on her book *See What You Made Me Do*. She also touched on the areas of coercive control, which I found very interesting. For those of you who have read *See What You Made Me Do*, and it appears that a number of members in the chamber have read it—I admit that I have only read parts of the book because, at times, I find it really challenging to read. It is quite stressful to read these stories of people who have experienced family and domestic violence. It is one of those books that lays on my bedside table and every now and then I pick it up, read a bit more and then put it down. It might be a couple of weeks before I come back to it. The minister kindly lent me this book when I first became her parliamentary secretary. I want to share with some members, who may not be aware of this book, some of the issues that it highlights. I also want to state that it is based on exhaustive research. That is really important to highlight. It is quite compelling storytelling. It also dismantles the myth and the logic of victim blaming. It challenges our views on what we thought we knew about domestic violence. This is just a taste —

At the office of Safe Steps, Victoria's 24/7 family violence helpline, the phones have gone quiet. 'I get nervous when they stop ringing,' says one worker. It's a rare occurrence. At its busiest, Safe Steps receives a call every three minutes. Many women are repeat callers: on average, they will return to an abusive partner seven times before leaving for good.

'You must get so frustrated when you think a woman's ready to leave and then she decides to go back,' I say.

'No,' replies one phone counsellor pointedly. 'I'm frustrated that even though he promised to stop, he chose to abuse her again.'

A year into my reporting on domestic abuse, I had a terrible realisation. It was 2015, and I was hanging clothes out to dry on a stunning summer night alive with the screeching of fruit bats. The air was cool on my skin. I felt content, peaceful; safe. As I walked towards our back steps, washing basket in hand, a cascade of thoughts swept through me with such force it made my eyes sting. To feel safe in the dark—even in my own backyard—was a *privilege*. How many women would never feel safe in their backyard? How many would be approaching their back steps with a sense of dread? How many would be steeling themselves for what might happen to them in bed that night? How many would feel their breath quicken at every rustle of leaves, terrified that somewhere in the dark, the man they once loved was waiting for them?

We talk a lot about the danger of dark alleys, but the truth is that in every country around the world the home is the most dangerous place for a woman. Of the 87,000 women killed globally in 2017, more than a third (30,000) were killed by an intimate partner, and another 20,000 by a family member. In Australia, a country of almost 25 million, one woman a week is killed by a man she's been intimate with. These statistics tell us something that's almost impossible to grapple with: it's not the monster lurking in the dark women should fear, but the men they fall in love with.

This is a book about love, abuse and power. It's about a phenomenon that flourishes in private and in public, perpetrated mostly by men who evade scrutiny. It's about all the questions we don't ask, like: 'Why does *he* do it?' It's about turning our stubborn beliefs and assumptions inside out and confronting one of the most complex—and urgent—issues of our time.

For the first time in history we have summoned the courage to confront domestic abuse. This has been a radical shift, and in years to come, 2014 will likely stand as the year the Western world finally started taking men's violence against women seriously.

It goes on to tell the story of Rosie Batty, which I am sure most members in the chamber are already familiar with, so I will not continue. If members have not had the opportunity to watch the program, I recommend the book, even though I found it very challenging at times. It is written in a very riveting and compelling way, thanks to the great work of Jess Hill.

I would now like to touch on paragraph (b) of the motion before us because it is really important. When we are talking about family and domestic violence, there are a number of things that we have to do. We have to invest money as a government to make sure that we have appropriate places for women and children to go for their safety. We have to make sure that we are investing in preventive services and projects, and we also have to make sure that we are building awareness in the community on this issue. Then, of course, we have to make sure that there is legislative reform. My colleague Hon Sandra Carr touched a little on some of the money that we are investing in this space. Other members may also do that during their contributions. I was primarily going to focus on some of the legislative reform that I think is really important in this space—reform that helps women and children who are suffering from family and domestic violence.

One of the most significant progressive law reforms that we have seen in family and domestic violence is the Family Violence Legislation Reform Act 2020. That legislation was passed in June 2020. It amended nine separate acts across six ministerial portfolios. These new laws put WA at the forefront of the fight against family and domestic violence. One of the key changes that came about from this legislative reform relates to strangulation and suffocation. Many members would know that strangulation is a common act in family violence. It is not just the physical act that impacts the victim; it is also an act that tells the victim that the perpetrator can kill them. The act of strangulation is an act of power over another person. Often, it is the final warning in the context of domestic violence. Non-fatal strangulation is known as a red flag for ongoing severe violence or homicide in domestic violence. The introduction of this new offence tells victims that we recognise the nature of the act and that family violence is about power, control and coercion. It tells perpetrators that we will not accept crimes continuing to occur in homes across our state. Often, the act of strangulation leaves no outward signs of injury, which makes it really difficult to prove as a criminal matter. However, as of November 2021, 646 charges of strangulation or suffocation were laid, which demonstrates increasing awareness in this offence and that victim survivors continue to come forward. There is no doubt that this new offence will save lives.

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One of the other areas of legislative reform that I would like to touch on is persistent family violence. That was also introduced as a criminal offence. This offence recognises that for many victims of family violence, the offending is ongoing. It occurs daily, weekly or monthly. It is persistent in the life of a victim. This is the first criminal offence in Western Australia that contains the words “family violence” in its title. One of the issues that is raised in the book *See What You Made Me Do* is coercive control. Coercive control refers to that persistent abuse and behaviour that aims to manipulate, intimidate and isolate victims, whether it be emotionally, socially or financially. In addition to the persistent family violence offence, new provisions were introduced to the Evidence Act 1906 to allow relevant evidence of coercive control to be admissible in criminal proceedings. This allows the courts to consider underlying patterns of coercive control in relationships. Experts can give evidence about the impact of coercive control and the judge can give directions to the jury about family violence. This is really important. This can also be prosecuted with existing offences in the Criminal Code, which are often behaviours displayed in relationships involving coercive control, such as threats, stalking and certain sexual offences.

The Restraining Orders Acts 1997 also defines family violence as including any behaviour by a person that coerces or controls a family member or causes them to be fearful. The victims may apply for a restraining order if they have been subject to coercive or controlling behaviour. Like Hon Sandra Carr said, we absolutely acknowledge that there is still work to be done, particularly with regard to coercive control. It raises a number of complex legal and policy issues that are being considered by governments at a state and national level, but we need to make sure that we get this right. We are focused on achieving the best outcomes for victims and survivors; we owe that to them, at the very least.

I would like to make note of some other initiatives across some of the other portfolios that assist with helping victims of family and domestic violence. They relate to the changes that were made to the Residential Tenancies Act. They ensure that victims are not left to pay for damage and debts that they are not responsible for. Of course, that can occur quite often in cases of family and domestic violence, where property can be destroyed and it is not the fault of the victim. We introduced antenatal screening in the public health system to support women who are about to give birth because, shockingly, they are at high risk of violence. We also introduced paid leave and other measures for public sector employees who are affected by family and domestic violence.

We implemented the WA Respectful Relationships teaching support program pilot to teach students about positive and respectful relationships. That is really important, because we want to prevent people becoming perpetrators and committing violence against women and children. We are also training more frontline police officers to help them better identify and respond to family and domestic violence. I think we have done a significant amount of work, including the funds that have been invested since we came to government in 2017 and the appointment of the very first Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence in WA. Millions of dollars have been spent in this area and will continue to be. We have started the 16 Days in WA campaign to raise awareness of this issue in the community. Many members of Parliament from all sides of politics attend this event each November, and that is fantastic to see.

We have also introduced really important legislation and reforms that help women and children who are experiencing family and domestic violence. Again, I want to thank Hon Sandra Carr for moving this motion today, highlighting this important issue and reminding everyone in this chamber how important it is for us to continue to work on preventing family and domestic violence.

HON JACKIE JARVIS (South West) [2.03 pm]: I rise today to speak in support of this motion, moved by Hon Sandra Carr, and I thank her for bringing such an important subject to the house. I also thank Hon Nick Goiran for his comments and his many, many questions. I think that is a great sign, because it shows that we will be talking about this subject in this forty-first Parliament for a long time to come. I, too, look forward to understanding more about the Path to Safety action plan and the 10-year strategy, and how they are being implemented. I also thank my colleague Hon Samantha Rowe for outlining some of the legislation.

As we all know, family and domestic violence is not an isolated event but a pattern of ongoing, repetitive and purposeful use of physical, emotional, social, financial and/or sexual abuse. Last year I had the opportunity to visit a number of police stations in my large south west electorate and when I asked at various police stations which offences created the biggest workload, I was a bit shocked to discover that it was family and domestic violence and child sexual abuse that kept uniformed officers and detectives busy. On one particular occasion—I do not want to dwell on which police station it was—I was actually told by a police sergeant that they know when the FIFO shifts are ending and starting by the number of family and domestic violence calls that they get in that town. We know that the mining industry has taken a long, hard look at itself over the last 12 months in respect of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace. The next step may be for those companies to consider how their work schedules and the FIFO lifestyle impact on family life. The town where the police sergeant told me that is a place with lots

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of lovely families in lovely homes, leading Instagram-worthy lives, who are experiencing this family and domestic violence. It is everywhere.

I am also particularly concerned when we see family and domestic violence that involves children, or child sexual abuse by a trusted adult. We need to recognise the significant impact that that can have on a child. We know that it can be hugely detrimental; we have seen many cases of people who have suffered lifelong trauma as a result of childhood abuse. We also know that both family and domestic violence and child sexual abuse is often understated and underreported. Although the figures are shocking, the true story is probably even more shocking.

Hon Sandra Carr talked about Grace Tame and Brittany Higgins, and their speeches at the National Press Club. I will not revisit that, but I was reminded that Grace Tame became a household name as a brave and passionate advocate for systematic changes to prevent child sexual abuse. We may remember that she was the first female in Tasmania to be granted the right to speak under her own name about her personal experience of sexual abuse as a child. Grace first appeared in public as part of the Let Her Speak campaign run by sexual assault campaigner and award-winning journalist Nina Funnell. The Let Her Speak campaign was about giving sexual assault survivors the right to tell their own stories in their own words, without the risk of prosecution.

As a reminder—I think most members know the story—Grace Tame was groomed and repeatedly sexually assaulted by her high school maths teacher, a man who was in his 50s at the time, when she was just 15 years old. Her abuser pleaded guilty to having sexual contact with a minor aged under 17 years and was sentenced and jailed, but after he was released from jail he was quite active on social media. He gave interviews via video that were shared widely online. My understanding is that he actually included a photo and the name of Grace Tame as his victim without her permission. Under the Tasmanian law of the time, Grace Tame was unable to speak publicly and she campaigned to have that changed. Hon Samantha Rowe spoke about the WA Evidence Act, and I was pleased to discover that under that legislation, a person can authorise the release of their name as a victim in matters of sexual offence, as long as that person is aged over 18 years, they are not mentally impaired and they are able to make that judgement call. Therefore, we have a mechanism to allow victims to speak about their assault if they wish to do so. This is really important, because although Grace Tame and Brittany Higgins are outstanding examples of very brave women, not all women are that brave, or they might have a lot to lose by speaking out. I cannot imagine the fear and repeated trauma that must be experienced by speaking about certain experiences.

I have no lived experience of family and domestic violence or child sexual abuse, but I have done a significant amount of work in the area of sexual harassment, and at times, sexual harassment includes sexual assault. I know, from having spoken to dozens of women and young men—I say “young”, because sexual harassment is generally a crime committed against younger people—that speaking out can have repercussions for people’s careers and mental health.

In the case of domestic violence, speaking out could actually cost them their lives or their homes. I also have a very interesting example of how certain people, when they speak out, get much more media attention. Members may recall that, in June last year, I spoke about a certain member of Parliament. I do not want to go back over that, but I spoke about a sexual harassment case. In my speech, all I had done was recount a story that women through the generations have told, when one woman warns another woman about a person’s behaviour. I know from my many years in the workforce that that is a common thing to do—people say, “Stay away from this person; avoid that person.” I was publicly threatened with defamation. I was told my comments were scurrilous, which means that my comments were false, when I recounted the story. If I had taken the opportunity to repeat those comments outside Parliament, all I would have done is almost compel other women to come forward and talk about their situation, but that was not my story to tell. It is really important to remember that using the media or going public with stories is not everyone’s chosen path and, for many victims, it can actually lead to severe damage. I applaud women who have the strength to do that, but for many women, it creates a fear for their careers, their lives and their homes. It creates fear about the breakdown of their families.

Hon Sandra Carr mentioned funding so I do not want to revisit that, but the reality is that there will probably never be enough money to solve this problem. This is a huge systemic issue. All we can do as a government is to try our best to provide avenues for those women or children who do not have voices. I will speak briefly about the Respectful Relationships program. I am the mother of three daughters, and it horrifies me to think that my three daughters are more likely to be attacked in their homes by an intimate partner than by a stranger. I do not have sons. I do not know anything about raising sons. I meet many young men, however, who are friends of my daughters or their boyfriends, and they are all lovely, respectful young men. I take great pride in the people who my daughters mix with. My 17-year-old daughter, however, recently told me a story about a close friend of hers who had a boyfriend, whom I have met—he seemed a nice kid—who had been a bit critical of this girl posting photographs of herself on Instagram in her bikini or her shorts. I can assure members that 17-year-old girls put lots of photos of themselves on Instagram. A group of friends gathered around this girl and said, “He cannot tell her to remove photos from her Instagram page. He cannot tell her what to.” This girl, being really unsure of herself, was not sure what to do. I am sure probably many women have had boyfriends in the past who have demonstrated behaviours bordering on coercive control.

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I took that opportunity to tell my daughter the story of Hannah Clarke, the Queensland woman who in 2020 was killed along with her three children by her estranged husband. I think petrol was poured into her car. If my reading of that incident is correct, Hannah Clarke had never experienced physical violence against herself or her children. It was all about coercive control, and the first act of physical violence that she experienced resulted in the death of her and her three young children. I told my daughter that story to show her that she needed to stand by her friend and be there for her, because the young man who made those comments to her is on the wrong path. Perhaps he needs to be brought into line as well.

I am really grateful for the Respectful Relationships program, because that is absolutely the key. I am also incredibly grateful that I was in the house when we passed mandatory reporting laws. We look to protect child sex abuse victims through mandatory reporting. I absolutely welcome the stand that we are taking in reviewing sexual assault laws. I look forward to Hon Nick Goiran's many questions on our delivery of the strategy, because he is right—he is here to keep us to account, and by God, that is what he does!

HON DR BRIAN WALKER (East Metropolitan) [2.16 pm]: I could speak to you, President, about this topic for hours, but I will not, you will be pleased to know. I will take just a few minutes.

First, I thank Hon Sandra Carr for bringing forward this immensely important topic. For a moment, may I expand this into the wider area because the points the member brought out form one part of a larger ocean of violence? If I could generalise for a moment, right now we have a problem with violence in our society, and, obviously, here we see physically weaker members—women and children—suffering tremendously, but it is also true that practically all areas of society are suffering from violence now. Violence is a method of communication; it is an aberrant method of communication. It is a failure of the ability to properly communicate with the other and also with yourself. We have a fundamental problem. As a doctor I deal with all forms of violence on a regular basis. I will come back to domestic violence shortly, but all forms of violence are to be repudiated, whether it in the workplace, where a person is being bullied, or has an oppressive manager. It does not matter whether a person is being physically or mentally harassed, nor who or where they are, all of this is wrong.

The fundamental issue here, as other members have stated, is one of control. Let us get back to domestic violence, which is where the focus will be today—control. The loss of control, or the perceived loss of control, always results in anxiety. Anxiety is a perception, whether real or imaginary, of the loss of control. When we have anxiety, we try to take measures to protect ourselves from that loss of control. In the domestic violence situation, we have, of course, the perceived or actual loss of control—someone who is being abused by someone who is stronger physically. The other aspect here is the person who is committing the crime, because we see that what has been brought out here—this leads on to what the McGowan government has done to increase the funds being given to manage domestic violence—is barely scratching the surface, because we are not dealing with the cause. As long as we do not deal with the cause, the situation will continue. It has to be a multifactorial treatment of a very complex problem, for which there are no easy solutions.

I thank the member once again for bringing this to our attention. It is a very honourable thing to do, and we must take this seriously because it is destructive to every aspect of our society. People are coming to me because they cannot sleep, and asking for more sleeping tablets. I ask them why they are not able to sleep and they say they just cannot sleep. What is going on? People are coming with anxiety, asking for cannabis for some kind of relief from anxiety. I ask them why they need it, and the stories come out. I am seeing a tsunami—a tidal wave—of violence that is often expressed in domestic violence, which then is hidden. I have dealt with this all my clinical career. I have sewed people back together with massive slashing wounds. These are the ones who survive, of course. What particularly hurts is when you see the children being brought in—the ones we see in the emergency department who have diseases and damage or who were dropped. We are told that the baby fell from the cot, but the story simply does not hold water. I remember. I have pictures on my phone of an emaciated child, just about a hair's breadth from death due to neglect. It hurts us—the carers, the doctors and the nurses and other people—because we are seeing this and nothing can be done because I in my clinic find myself utterly powerless to manage this. There is another pill. What can we do about this? We will see a psychiatrist.

I have to tell members about the psychiatric approach to managing this. A person has stress because they are being beaten at home. Their husband or boyfriend is coming back angry because he lacks control. He is fearful for his job and nothing is the way it should be so he takes it out on the family. He wants and tries to exert control. He does that by doing awful, unspeakable things to the family, who breathe a sigh of relief when he goes again. People say to that person, "Why don't you leave?" They have that look on their face. I can see it in front of me now. Many years ago, I asked a woman who had been brought in yet again after being beaten why she was going to go back. She said, "Because he loves me." I have seldom in my life heard such a sad thing.

We have control, anxiety and inadequate communication. I put to members that we in this chamber suffer from miscommunication as it is. We fail to make ourselves understood or to understand what is really being said. I will

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give an example I was told many years ago. The husband walks into the house and the wife is doing the dishes—why is the wife doing the dishes, by the way? Why not the husband? He walks in and says, “Let’s go for a walk.” She says, “A walk would be nice, but I’m doing the dishes. I can’t go; I’m busy.” He then says “Why?” That is a stupid question, of course. The wife is thinking “That’s a stupid question. I’m doing the bloody dishes!” What started out as a nice invitation to go for a walk ends up as a fight. I am sure we have all experienced this in some form or another. Then it degenerates of course into the smack, because he thinks she never does what he wants, and it gets worse and worse. Members can see that communication, or lack of communication, started this. Perhaps one of the solutions we ought to offer, apart from court management and prison sentences, is to teach people how to communicate.

When do we start teaching people how to communicate? I have been thinking about this for decades. We start when a child is about four years old. That is when we start to learn to communicate—how to understand another person and make ourselves understood in a respectful manner, because we are all different but we are all the same. Who is going to teach the four-year-olds? Because teachers most certainly have not learnt how to communicate. This is a multigenerational thing going back thousands of years. We have not yet learnt how to communicate as sophisticated, civilised human beings because we have not been taught by parents, who were not taught by their parents and so it goes on. If we do not fix this, the circle will keep going round and round. It will be repeated. We will try as best we can to fix this. I will sit in my room with the doctor wondering, “How do I fix this?” It is actually our job. We need to take the bull by the horns and fix it, because it is a societal problem that we can manage.

I think prevention is the best way to do this. Yes, we need to have a legal approach and some form of control of that. I used to work in corrective services. I remember an awful man who was released from prison but had a violence restraining order against him and was not to approach his ex-wife. But he did. He walked up to her, stabbed her eight times and was happy to go back to prison thinking that he had seen her off properly. That is foul. He is in prison still and may he never come out. What was he doing that for? Was it to salvage pride?

A member: Power.

Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER: It was power, indeed.

There are so many emotions going on but none of them are positive because we have not learned to communicate with ourselves or with others in a way that allows us to be true human beings, to be civilised and to express that one universal power that matters—that is, love. Because nothing else really matters, does it? Treating that would be a way to move forward.

I am very much in favour of using psychedelics and cannabis. What we are looking at here is post-traumatic stress disorder. We have looked at the sexy side of veterans coming back from Afghanistan or police suffering PTSD, and so we should, but they are actually the minority. There are hundreds of thousands of people in our society who suffer PTSD because of things out of their control. They are suffering. We ought to be able to do something for them. I can tell members from the horse’s mouth that the medical approach, the psychiatric approach, does not do anything at all. Doctors can give people as much Quetiapine, Clonazepam and Temazepam as they like, but it will not work. It might suffice to bring things down a little bit to allow people to become calmer until the other person comes along and beats them senseless once again or even worse.

I am not going to mention the physical, mental, social and psychological abuse of children, and how they then grow up to become adults who do the same thing because that is all they have learnt. They have not been taught the communication that they need because it was not learnt by their parents.

The caution I give here, absolutely supporting what Hon Sandra Carr has said, is that we need to look at having a broader approach. Yes, we need money for psychiatric and legal services, but we need to effect a change in the thinking process of the whole population because this matters to each and every one of us. There is not one of us who would not benefit from that. There is not one of us who could not brighten the life of someone near and dear to them by improving the way they think, speak and understand—the way we communicate with ourselves and with each other. This is an intimate matter for every single one of us. Everyone here should take this idea home and work on it because it matters to not only this very important topic, which I heartily support, but also every single person in this state, in this country and, in fact, in this world.

HON AYOR MAKUR CHUOT (North Metropolitan) [2.26 pm]: I acknowledge my colleague Hon Sandra Carr for the wonderful motion she has brought to the table today for us to discuss. It is a very important motion because violence against women or any person is unacceptable. Sadly, violence is a big problem in our society and we really need to bring the issue to the table. I wanted to acknowledge Hon Sandra Carr for that.

Women in a mixed culture, especially in the culturally and linguistically diverse community, are affected by this. Social factors also make Indigenous women and women in the CALD community, as I mentioned, particularly

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vulnerable and they are the ones who are mostly affected. That is to do with a lack of English language skills, unemployment and cultural trauma, such as experienced by people from Third World countries. It is very important for us to talk about it. These factors also make it more difficult for women to get help and support. They do not have English language skills and there is nowhere to go or to reach out to. A study of migrant and refugee women in Australia found that 40 per cent of those who experienced family and domestic violence did not share their experience with anyone. That is because there is nowhere for them to go or they are afraid because of the cultural aspect of it.

The statistics on violence against women in Australia are increasing. It is a criminal offence. One in three women in Australia have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. One in five women have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15. One in four women have experienced emotional abuse since 15 as well. One in two women have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime. And shamefully, in Australia one woman is murdered every week by her current partner—that is, someone who they truly love and trust—as my colleague mentioned earlier. Aboriginal women are 32 per cent more likely than non-Aboriginal women to be in hospital due to family violence.

Violence against women and their children has been estimated to cost Australia \$22 billion annually. Here in Western Australia, no matter who you are or what background you come from, you are either directly affected by family and domestic violence because of someone you know, or you know someone who knows someone. It is in the city, the villages and the country. It affects people who are poor, middle class or upper class. It affects people who are black, white or rainbow coloured. It affects the disadvantaged and the privileged in similar ways as well, because it is about power and control. It can be seen out on the street, but mostly it is not. Mostly, it is hidden. It is an invisible burden carried by families—mostly women and their children—and by hospitals, police and emergency services. They suffer the most because they are the ones who see the scenes first. Family and domestic violence harms women in the North Metropolitan Region and, of course, throughout our society. It is mostly caused by men, but not always. The harm of family and domestic violence is also experienced by girls and boys, men and the elderly. Most of the time the elderly are very vulnerable because they cannot defend themselves. It is a blight on our state's conscience.

This Parliament celebrated Edith Cowan's 100th anniversary last year, in 2021. Edith felt moved to enter this place to better the lives of women and children. She was greatly affected by her own father's murderous act committed against her stepmother. Why is it still going on? That was 100 years ago. It is because it is a man's problem most of the time. Violence is a man's problem. It is a problem around identity, self-regulation, power and responsibility. It requires men to stand up and say that enough is enough—that they want to do better and they want their son to do better. Fortunately, I belong to a government that understands this. Our Premier is a man who says that enough is enough. The McGowan government is an aware and compassionate government, a government that is serious about action and change. It is energised and ready to address this complex community issue through a significant increase in funding, messaging and legislative reform, as my colleague mentioned earlier.

Proudly, this government has appointed Western Australia's first dedicated Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence. That is how committed it is to addressing what is, most of the time, men's abuse in our society. The McGowan government has launched the *Path to safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020–2030*. It is our long-term vision for a Western Australia where all people live free from family and domestic violence. I will read out a brief overview of our 2021 election commitments: a \$60 million boost to help prevent family and domestic violence; \$29.5 million on a Safe Home, Safe Family package for women and children fleeing violence; \$7.3 million to prevention programs and training, which is a very sensible one—prevention is very important; \$4 million will be invested in new supporting survivors' initiatives; and \$14.2 million for a law reform package.

The government introduced the most comprehensive family violence legislation in Western Australia—the Family Violence Legislation Reform Act 2020. It was passed in June 2020. It amended nine separate acts across six ministerial portfolios and will keep perpetrators accountable. The McGowan government has committed over \$2 million to train 300 first responders, such as paramedics and GPs, to help recognise and respond to family and domestic violence. There was also an investment into new women's refuges in 2020—Warlang Bidi in the Peel region and Andrea Mia in Kwinana. Additionally, we are establishing an \$8.7 million refuge facility in the East Metro region and a \$4.3 million rapid rehousing pilot to quickly help women and children into transitional homes, because, most of the time, when women get into those situations, they do not have anywhere to stay. I am really proud of that commitment.

We understand that prevention is a long-term goal to ending family and domestic violence and that is why we are focused on strategies that educate our children. The WA Respectful Relationships teaching support program teaches students from a young age about positive and respectful relationships. I heard that from the Leader of the

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House a few days ago. It is so important. We will also expand Respectful Relationships approaches to sport and recreation clubs and organisations in 2022.

As a member for North Metro and a member of the culturally and linguistically diverse community, I commend the McGowan government for being committed to action that promotes equality and respectful relationships. For this reason, I highly support and really appreciate Hon Sandra Carr for bringing this wonderful motion to the table.

HON WILSON TUCKER (Mining and Pastoral) [2.36 pm]: I rise to support the motion and I thank the honourable member for raising this very important topic today. I admittedly do not have much experience when it comes to family and domestic violence. I can thank, in part, a privileged upbringing for my ignorance on this topic. I think I could ask a lot of us about whether we have things we would like to change about our childhoods and how we were raised. But if I put it in terms of whether someone has experienced family and domestic violence first hand, if they have not, I do not think they really have a lot to complain about. One of the benefits I have found of being in this place is that it gives you the privilege of being exposed to a lot of different topics, and certainly enough to be dangerous. I think the longer members are in this place, the less of an excuse they have of not having that firsthand experience. This is one of those topics, certainly with the resources that are available to members of this place.

As I listened to members' contributions, I was not surprised to hear some heartbreaking statistics being shared, especially around a disproportionate representation of the Indigenous population for family and domestic violence. I would like to take this opportunity to point out that the National Agreement on Closing the Gap does track family and domestic violence for the Indigenous population. I am sure that all members are aware there are 17 different targets and outcomes for Closing the Gap, to which all states and territories are signatories. The thirteenth target states that "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe"—that is the target. The outcome we are striving for is —

By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.

The latest data states that in 2018–19, the national average was 8.4 per cent. That is, 8.4 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 15 years and over had experienced domestic or physical abuse or were threatened with physical harm. I would also like to state that Western Australia is the second worst state with the second highest rate when it comes to that target. We are above the national average of 8.4 per cent. We are at nine per cent, second only to New South Wales.

I am glad to hear that there has been investment recently in this space, and I am glad to see that we have a dedicated minister and portfolio for this very important topic because it clearly deserves it. But clearly, more needs to be done, especially in respect of our Indigenous population.

It is just a short contribution from me. In closing, I think it is important to advocate for these issues at all levels of our society. We heard from Hon Jackie Jarvis about the conversations we are having federally, which is fantastic to see. Certainly we should be looking to have a debate here at the state level as well, which is exactly what we are doing here today. I thank Hon Sandra Carr for raising this matter today. I hope to address my personal knowledge gap on this issue, and I will certainly put the SBS series on my to-watch list.

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.40 pm]: I, too, would like to thank Hon Sandra Carr for moving this very important motion because it should be discussed in this chamber. It is a conversation that has been front and centre in the federal sphere for a while now but, unfortunately, I personally have been let down by a lack of leadership on a federal level. It would support states such as Western Australia and Australia as a whole, if the federal government lead the conversation, rather than just moving alleged—or found to be proven—offenders to the back bench for a little bit of time out and then shuffled back into cabinet. That sends the wrong message on what has been discussed in this place today around what we want to see.

I see a lot of similarities with what Hon Wilson Tucker has said; this job exposes us to things that we are not normally exposed to. Since 2017, I, too, have been exposed to child sex abuse survivors and people from family and domestic violence situations, which has forced me to grow and build my knowledge on what we are doing to move forward, particularly in the goldfields region. I believe that it has now put me in a position in which I have ended up being, in some situations, a survivor's last lifeline. Survivors go through the story of all the different organisations and people they have trusted to go through a process to find a better life. In a lot of the situations that I have encountered, I, as a member of Parliament, have tended to be their last hope. I think as members of this place and the other place, it is our role to ensure that we connect the dots for them.

I want to talk about people not being just "dot connectors", but leaders in support, in exposing domestic violence perpetrators and, more importantly, in providing a safe space for women who are having one of the most serious and frightening experiences of their life. One such place is the Women's Health Care Centre in Kalgoorlie. I started

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working with the clinic back in 2017 when it did not have a full-time GP. I believe most women's healthcare clinics do not have GPs. I believe we are trying to address that at the moment. Providing a GP means that it not only is a safe space for women to get health checks but also provides all the wraparound services. CEO Gloria Moyle is an amazing advocate who is not backwards in coming forward. She is one of the best lobbyists I have ever seen in getting what she wants to see in that space. She is also a very good at explaining the real-life situation that we face. The stories and situations that she would have seen of the years would be traumatising for many people. But she had an amazing ability to bring me into the fold of the organisation and allow me to understand, from a firsthand perspective, the challenges that women are facing. Just having a GP meant that a stream of women came in for check-ups, but stayed to talk to counsellors about bigger issues. In turn, that exposed domestic violence situations.

I will also mention the women's refuge in Kalgoorlie. It does an amazing job as well. Mandy Reidy, who is there at the moment, has been another strong advocate in expanding the refuge and has worked very closely with our local member, Ali Kent. The refuge has a new playground and new equipment that create a better and brighter space. I know a lot of members have mentioned this, but it is not often that someone seeks refuge once. They go through it many times. I think the average was seven times before someone ends up leaving a domestic violence situation. The refuge and the women's healthcare clinic become a safe space where women feel comfortable. That is important, particularly in regional towns. I know the women's refuge in Port Hedland has a similar role that it has done for many years. It would be remiss of me not to mention the great work that it is doing there.

As part of the government strategy, we delivered a family and domestic violence hub, which was interesting. It was very hotly contested by local organisations to run it, but when it came through, it was done in such a way that I can only commend the department and the people who won the tender. It has such cultural significance in respect of feeling safe and comfortable when someone walks into the hub. They have taken every single bit of time they could to ensure that someone from the lands that comes in, someone who lives locally, will feel comfortable and safe in that space. Culturally appropriate things that we would not expect people to think of have been thought of. The organisation that is running it now is doing a great job. It is at the end of Brookman Street. It is great to see that the government has followed through on that commitment and put the hub there. It creates a space that is a one-stop shop for someone who needs assistance.

I want to mention someone who has not only been a strong advocate for raising awareness of domestic violence but has also transitioned into protection against violence, and that is Sandy Taylor. Sandy was a big part of an event that was held every year, and I got involved in it probably seven or eight years ago. It is called Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, and it literally means walk a mile in her shoes. Participants have to put on high heels or whatever shoes they can find that will fit their feet. For me, that was quite difficult with size 13 feet. Men from male-dominated industries and people who we would not expect to participate come out, put on women's shoes and then walk one mile. A lot of women are there in support. I remember Minister McGurk was there in 2017 and there was just so much information and so much of a conversation happening. It was really inspiring to go there to support not only raising the awareness, but also processes for protecting women against violence in the first place.

I think the conversation has really changed over the past five to 10 years from raising awareness that domestic violence is real, and it is there, and it happens every day, and it could be next door to us and it does not judge us on the colour of our skin or our situation—domestic violence is real—to now: let us protect people against domestic violence. I think that is a really good indication of where we are heading. Hon Samantha Rowe mentioned domestic violence week.

I commend all the unions in Australia, right across this country, that have been fighting for domestic violence leave. Employers will not do it without being pushed, which is, in my view, a shame. Unions—the Australian Council of Trade Unions, along with all its affiliates—have been pushing for domestic violence leave. Just think about it: if somebody comes into work fatigued or tired, we do not know the situation. Back when I was an organiser, I heard about a young lady who was up until five o'clock in the morning having a row with her partner and then she went in for a 12-hour shift to work on heavy machinery. What was going on in the household was not her fault, yet she did not have sick leave and could not afford to take a day off without pay. There are other situations in which people need to attend court to apply for an apprehended violence order or for financial reasons and they end up losing money from their workplace, but they also probably put themselves in a spot in which they are taking time off and their employer is not aware of the situation. The more conversations we have about employers doing the right thing without being forced to do so by unions—just putting it there because it should be there—the more we will make that conversation a bit easier for employees to have with their employers and the more people will access that right, which is what it should be.

As I touched on earlier, I feel as though we have been let down by the federal leadership in this country, particularly over the last three years. Where we are heading as a state has been touched on many times. The role of Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence was created, so we are trying our absolute best as a state. It has been really hard to watch some of the rhetoric, games and political footballs being created around violence against women,

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bullying and harassment, and women just being treated differently in general because of their sex. Every time there is some sort of media grab from Scott Morrison or Barnaby Joyce, there is so much insincerity from them. From my perspective, it is sickening. I do not see the member for O'Connor, Rick Wilson, doing anything notable in that space; nor does he call out any of his colleagues who have been in that situation. As I said earlier, it seems to be almost common practice for members of the federal government to take a back seat for a month and then get re-elevated to cabinet, which is just not on.

I wish to add my absolute praise for Grace Tame and Brittany Higgins. I have been honoured enough to hear Rosie Batty speak twice. Talk about powerful. There is not a dry eye in the room after Rosie has made a speech. I am very glad that women of that calibre are out there speaking on this crisis that we see across the country and the world. Grace Tame has held herself up admirably and, as we saw at the National Press Club, has fought against continued abuse for calling out perpetrators. Members in this chamber will be aware of the comments that Grace made about the threats she received for her actions after being awarded Australian of the Year. It is absolutely shameful to think that that would come from anywhere. Everyone is aware of this woman's story. It is absolutely disgraceful. I take my hat off to Brittany Higgins for giving the speech that she did at the National Press Club. The work that these women are currently doing will make the Parliament, and this country, only better. Let us not forget that it is not just in Parliament where women are mistreated with violence or bullying and harassment; it is happening in many workplaces, particularly male-dominated industries.

One of the things that I am proud of the Labor Party for is its affirmative action. The affirmative action rules that are in place in the Labor Party have ensured that 52 per cent of the caucus are women, which is a massive achievement and goes a long way to ensuring that people understand that it is changing. As members walk through the halls of Parliament, a lot of the pictures they see are of white men. That is changing. I am very grateful to be living in this day and age when things are changing. Hopefully, that is being reflected in a lot of other workplaces. Workplace employers showing respect and understanding for those experiencing family and domestic violence can play a part in assisting those people to get through a tough time in their life. It should not be a burden on a person's employment. When someone is put in a position of crisis, they should have the ability to work with their employer to ensure that they do not lose one of the very few things they may take away from their relationship—that is, their genuine employment.

Again, I would like to thank Hon Sandra Carr and everyone who has contributed to the motion.

I will touch on one other point that I nearly forgot. There was a very worrying situation a couple of years ago, and I have not seen another report about it since. When the federal government introduced the cashless welfare card in the East Kimberley, there were some genuine fears about what would happen. I do not think the federal government took a really hard look at some of the effects. One of the things that came out of a report by, I believe, the University of Adelaide was that there was a significant increase in domestic violence in the East Kimberley after the cashless welfare card was implemented. That was because the federal government changed the system, and the flow-on effects from that happened to be an increase in domestic violence. That is a very scary thought. There were a lot of promises when the cashless welfare card was introduced to have hubs for financial support and counselling services. It was said that the goal was to reduce gambling and the use of alcohol and drugs; however, it was just a way of monitoring welfare recipients by restricting 80 per cent of their welfare to the card and 20 per cent to cash. Obviously, people were trying to get hold of the 20 per cent of their welfare that was cash and were putting others in a position in which they either gave up that money or faced the consequences. I absolutely call upon the federal government to stop pushing through this cashless welfare card without understanding the ramifications that it can have on families and, in particular, vulnerable people in our society. I know that it has plans to push this card further, but I absolutely call upon it to take a step back and realise that when a small change is made, it can be a massive change for somebody's home life.

Again, I thank Hon Sandra Carr for moving this very worthy motion in the chamber.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE (Agricultural) [2.57 pm]: In the brief time that is available to me, I want to make some remarks about the motion moved by Hon Sandra Carr, and I thank her for the opportunity to do so. I have certainly listened intently to the contributions from all the speakers and I think everyone has brought a different experience and a different perspective to this at times very complex and confronting issue. Like many others who have spoken, I do not have a lived personal experience of family violence, but I have certainly had experience in providing support to my constituents on this issue and also on related child protection issues. They are some of the most complex and challenging matters that I have had to personally deal with in my office, and I think that has given me at least some perspective on the issue and the challenges, but I am certainly no subject matter expert.

I heard Hon Jackie Jarvis talk about the impact on policing, and I think that is a very real issue. Certainly, the police officers I have spoken to in my electorate have given me a unique insight into their role in this issue, particularly the lack of options outside the metropolitan area and our regional cities for crisis accommodation, whether that be for women and children or for perpetrators being removed from the family home. I want to put on the record that

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this is an issue that has been exacerbated in particular by the housing challenges that we face in Western Australia. When police are called to these situations, a serious lack of options are available, particularly for police and families.

The other thing that I want to talk about, which the motion in its current form does not do but all the presenters have touched on, is the important work of those people working particularly in our community services sector. I have already mentioned the police, but the role that our health professionals play who work in the public health system in particular and at the front line of this issue is important to note, and all members have, to some extent, noted that in their contributions. Their role is extraordinarily challenging.

There has been a lot of talk about how we solve this problem, and it is not going to be easy. I heard Hon Sandra Carr and Hon Dr Brian Walker talk about some of the societal challenges and how entrenched they are. It made me reflect on a conversation when we dealt with the Public Health Amendment (Safe Access Zone) Bill. Hon Peter Collier spoke about how important language is and how sometimes some of these problems start in the simplest form with our youngest people. I will draw on one experience. I have young children—two boys and a girl—who were in years 1 and 2 and kindy last year. The boys came home with this rhyme: “Girls are weak, chuck them in the creek; boys are strong like King Kong”. I am sure that these little rhymes have been around for a long time, but they are interesting to consider. I sat down with my boys and talked about this issue and how we respect each other and we are equal. I wondered how often, when those things are not addressed, they become entrenched and contribute to some of those societal issues that are so complex to then resolve. The impact of intergenerational trauma on children, the issues that often we have to face in our schooling system and the lack of understanding about the impact of trauma on children is something that I am not going to have time to explore in the time remaining. Our school system really struggles with supporting children who have experienced family violence in particular, but it is getting much better at it.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Member, I will interrupt you to give the call to Hon Sandra Carr. The standing orders allow the mover of the motion to have five minutes in reply.

HON SANDRA CARR (Agricultural) [3.02 pm] — in reply: I take this opportunity to thank everyone for supporting this motion and for their contributions today. I will begin by thanking Hon Nick Goiran for his contribution, particularly in terms of his analysis and questioning around legislation and the performance of government. I think that those are important questions to ask and we must always continue to reflect on how we can do better. As we have heard today on a number of occasions, there is a desperate need for us to do better.

I would also like to thank Hon Samantha Rowe for her contribution today. I agree with her in terms of how she shared the impact of the book *See What You Made Me Do*. It is a very challenging read. I have quite a vivid memory of sitting on a flight and reading some of that book. I had to put it down because I felt like I was going to throw up. It is a challenging read, but a very worthwhile read. I urge people who have not had the opportunity to engage with that text to read it and improve their understanding of and empathy with the experiences of people living with family and domestic violence and the resultant trauma.

I am testing my memory now to go back through the other speakers. I would also like to thank Hon Jackie Jarvis for her contribution. Her discussion about Brittany Higgins and Grace Tame was particularly important, but also the way in which she brought that back to her family and used real-life opportunities to educate her daughters and benefit some of her children’s friends. That is a particularly important story to relate because that is exactly how we adopt that whole community responsibility to ensure that we address this problem.

On the subject of anecdotes, I would also like to thank Hon Martin Aldridge for the story he shared about how he addressed the little rhyme that his children came home with. It is an excellent story that reminded me of when one of our delightful former radio hosts spoke about putting one of our former Prime Ministers in a chaff bag and throwing them out to sea: “Girls are weak, chuck them in the creek”. It does matter. It is a problem and it is ongoing. If people think that it is okay to speak about someone like that who holds the highest office of our country, then the actions of someone like Hon Martin Aldridge in educating his children before it becomes a problem are so profoundly important. I really do thank him for sharing that story and showing that leadership within his own family.

I would also like to thank Hon Dr Brian Walker for talking about the broader picture and how complex it is to address issues within society around the way that we communicate with each other and where our behaviours and responses really come from. That is quite a deeper and more philosophical discussion, but it is equally as important and a great contribution to help us understand how we can form policy and responses to problems such as these.

Thank you also to Hon Wilson Tucker for his contribution and acknowledgement that it is a learning process and we all have a responsibility, as part of our community responsibility, to address this problem, inform ourselves and be a part of the solution.

Thank you also to Hon Ayor Makur Chuot for her contribution, representation and discussion around the culturally and linguistically diverse community and how it is important to ensure that all people are represented and discussed.

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It showed that family and domestic violence is a matter that impacts the whole of society. It does not matter who you are or where you are from; it is a problem that we all have to address.

Finally, I would like to finish by thanking the people working in the services who help those people experiencing family and domestic violence. I thank them so much for their time, effort and work. I am so sorry that they have to continue to beg for funding. I hope that that is something that we all collectively work together to address rather than just standing here and talking about it today. Thank you.

Question put and passed.