



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Elimination of Violence against Women

SPEECH

Monday, 27 November 2023

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Monday, 27 November 2023 Page 59 Questioner Speaker Archer, Bridget MP</p>	<p>Source House Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p>
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Mrs ARCHER (Bass) (10:42): A few weeks ago I was working on a joint statement with my co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of Ending Violence Against Women and Children, the member for Canberra and Senator Waters in the other place. The statement called on all levels of government to prioritise the issue of gendered violence while also calling for us as a society to drive cultural change.

The statement was driven by a surge of women being killed by men's violence—five women in just 10 days prior to the statement. At the time the total was 43 women, as reported by Counting Dead Women Australia. Today, as the member for Newcastle has said, that number is at 53, and we know that coming into the holiday season there will be an increase in family violence incidents and that number will undoubtedly rise.

As the member for Newcastle stated earlier, one-in-three women have experienced physical violence perpetrated by a man since the age of 15, and we know that violence doesn't discriminate—it affects women of every age from every cultural background, with different jobs and levels of education or income, living in different areas and leading different lives.

This is a national emergency. The rate of femicides over recent years is horrific, and we must continue to raise our voices. I back the initiative from the member for Newcastle to read the names of the women who have been killed this year, as she has just done this morning, and I understand the member for Goldstein will also be calling on the government to establish an Australian homicide index that will generate the evidence needed to inform responses to family violence, an initiative I also support.

As I stand here today to mark the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which begins the 16 days of activism against gender based violence, I want to reiterate that we must move beyond the long-held school of thought that this is a women's issue. The continued violence against women at the hands of men is a men's issue. It is a societal and cultural issue, and women cannot keep fighting this alone.

I commend my colleagues from all sides who continue to work so hard to raise awareness and fight for funding for vital services and programs and who continue to speak up. I know so many men in here also care deeply about ending violence against women, and I acknowledge my colleagues the member for Sturt and the member for Cowper who will be speaking on this motion today. But I'm calling for men in here today to be a little louder. Your voices matter. You are leaders of your community and have a vital role to play in having the hard conversations in your electorates. I'd like to thank the member for Bruce and Senator Birmingham, who have taken the time recently to attend briefings and events in here about this issue.

As mentioned earlier, a critical role we as elected representatives can play is to ensure funding is delivered for critical frontline services and increasingly for programs that address the systemic cultural issues which feed the continuation of gender based violence. In the northern Tasmanian region, organisations Women's Legal Service Tasmania, Yemaya, Laurel House and Engender Equality are working collaboratively to roll out pioneering programs such as mentors in violence training; partnering with Girl Guides to deliver respectful relationships workshops, including early consent training for girls; and even a partnership with Playgroup Tasmania and Happy Habits to roll out the All Come Out to Play! program, which delivers messages of gender equality and respectful relationships through song, dance and story.

All the evidence bears out that we must start educating at a very young age in order to make a breakthrough on the long-held societal norms, and I'm thrilled to see this program rolling out in Tasmania. To each of these organisations, particularly in my electorate, I thank you for your tireless work. I know you are all working towards the ultimate goal of making your own jobs obsolete.

In the meantime, while the demand for services and education is higher than ever, I implore the government, as I did request of the coalition when in government, to put an end to the short-term funding demands placed on these organisations that require funding certainty to recruit and retain qualified staff and to roll out and deliver evidence

based programs across the long term. I suggest that, in a region like northern Tasmania, given the collaboration between a number of services, it would be great to fund the organisations as a hub model, which would ensure that the needs of women impacted by violence could be consistently met through a range of services.

Enough is enough is enough. I've lost count of the number of times I've spoken parliament on the topic of violence against women and children, and I live in hope that, if I am still standing here next year to mark this day, at least in this country we may have begun to see the slightest shift on the dial.