

## Gold Coast Bulletin

### EDITORIAL

# Loss in DV fight

WE'VE said it before and we cannot stress this enough: domestic violence is not an issue for political point-scoring.

As the *Bulletin* has also previously stated, it is a matter that demands priority for suffering partners and families, and should be front of mind when governments are allocating funding.

Family violence is a huge threat to society. It destroys relationships, it harms families, it impacts on work and school, its unrelenting trauma puts frightened victims in hospital, and it is a drain on health, social work, ambulance and police resources. It hurts every one of us – if not directly, then through society picking up the bill.

Sadly, the Gold Coast is probably more aware of this scourge than most other Australian cities. Its list of victims who have died in horrible and in some instances, very public circumstances reads like the death toll from a natural disaster, but there is

nothing natural about this.

Our city has been described by a local MP as the epicentre of domestic violence – a dreadful tag but true. And still the violence continues, despite the shock, the outrage and the acknowledgement that action must happen.

Tough new laws that passed through Parliament last month have reversed the presumption of bail in DV crimes involving assault, grievous bodily harm, deprivation of liberty, strangulation and kidnapping. Offenders have to prove they are reformed to be released from jail and must wear GPS trackers. A DV alert system means victims must be warned when perpetrators are about to be released.

The laws are a major step in the bid to contain domestic violence, but the job is far from finished.

It is puzzling therefore why the State Government keeps baulking at funding a

volunteer community legal service at Robina that has performed valuable, award-winning work in advising victims. The Robina Community Legal Centre has now closed. That just isn't right.

Our community expects better from elected leaders.