

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

AUSTRALIAN CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE FAMILY VIOLENCE

June 17, 2016

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I was thrilled to join the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in New York in March for an important conference. We attended the 60th Annual Meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations, with women from around the world and across Canada. I was inspired by the work being done to prevent violence against women and children.

Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about one document that particularly impressed me. It's from Australia. "Change the Story" is a framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and children, published last year by a national organization called Our Watch. This report was peer-reviewed and it draws on evidence-based best practices.

Our Watch takes as a starting point that violence against women and their children is not inevitable and it is preventable. It is a prevalent and serious human rights abuse. Their goal is an Australia where women are not only safe, but respected, valued, and treated as equals in both private and public life. This goal is ambitious but realistic, if endorsed by the whole country.

Our Watch is responding to an urgent need for collective action. One woman is murdered by a current or former partner each week, and Australian police deal with over 600 calls a day related to domestic violence. Aboriginal women experience violence at twice the rate of non-Indigenous women. The scope of violence against women resonated for me, given that the high levels of violence against women in the NWT prompted us to describe family and community violence as a crisis in our mandate.

Their response resonated, as well. "Primary prevention requires changing the social conditions, such as gender equality, that excuse, justify, or even promote violence against women and their children." Primary prevention activities include social media campaigns, workplace initiatives, and school programs that change fundamental values and practises.

Everyone has a role to play. With government leading the way, a broad-based movement for change can and will bring about social transformation. Think about the campaigns to wear seat belts or end drunk driving, and you get the idea of the kind of movement they are talking about. Australia is a world leader in primary prevention, and it's time for us to join them. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.