



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

Hansard 18 November 1998

SUPREME COURT OF QUEENSLAND ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (10.26 p.m.): I am pleased that the current Government is continuing with the reform of both the criminal practice rules and the uniform civil procedure rules. I have always believed that that reform is long overdue. Of course, the changes to the rules will have most significance for those who choose to use the courts and those who are forced to use the courts, in terms of both the legal system and the judiciary.

Continual work needs to be done to finalise the rules, which is something that has been talked about for two decades or more. The courts, and particularly Chief Justice de Jersey, have given a commitment to this reform. Some time ago the rules committee was set up as a working committee. It was led by Mr Justice Williams, who has worked assiduously on the rules. I look forward to the matter coming to fruition. I understand that the Chief Justice has indicated that the criminal practice rules ought to be completed by the end of the year and I look forward to that. In the first part of next year, the uniform civil court rules should be finalised. Those rules relate to the three levels of the courts—the Supreme, District and Magistrates Courts.

If Queensland pulls this off, we will be the first State in Australia to do so. This is a worthwhile project. When we talk about cheaper and easier access to justice for the public, the rules certainly have a significant role to play. We can all be proud of achieving a uniform set of, hopefully, much simpler rules. Of course, approximately 700 forms go with those rules, although they are not in printed form. One has to refer to the rules themselves to sort out what they are. This reform will allow the 90 or so forms to be produced in printed form, and they will also be put on computer. Solicitors and others using them will simply download them, insert the names and so on, and work from there. It will be a much simpler procedure than the current one. Only a minority of forms are currently produced and one has to work largely from scratch. This will enable a proper procedure to be put in place.

The only matter I would raise is a matter that I raised this morning, namely, it is my understanding that the Attorney-General received a letter from the Chief Justice around the end of September. There was time when the House sat in October to bring in this small Bill—it is a very small Bill containing a one-line amendment and another one or two-line amendment to the Cremations Act—so that we would not have had to cut into the 13-day period. However, that is not a big issue, because we are proposing such a simple amendment. I raise it only because the Premier, the member for Brisbane Central, made such a commotion about the great achievement of setting new standards. This is one time when perhaps we could have upheld those standards and not brought in this legislation in this way.

I appreciate the current Government continuing with these rules. I think it is very important. I can assure the Attorney-General that this will be required to be continually driven and will require continual support by his office and his departmental officers to ensure that it is a worthwhile exercise and something that once again will see Queensland leading the nation.
