



Speech by

GARY FENLON

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard 18 November 1998

LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE
Report

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (10.11 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House a report of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee in relation to its inquiry into the preservation and enhancement of individuals' rights and freedoms in Queensland. As part of our report, we have produced a unique and landmark document about Queensland citizens' rights in the form of a handbook titled *Queenslanders' Basic Rights*. I table both a short version of this handbook, which has been printed in multiple copies, and also a more detailed version of this handbook, which will be available on the Internet.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! When reports are being presented, the House will come to order.

Mr FENLON: The preparation of this handbook means that for the first time Queensland citizens will have a concise, easy-to-read handbook which explains what our basic rights are, where our rights come from, how we might find more information about our rights and enforcing them and how we might go about enhancing our rights.

Our report stems from the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission's inquiry into individuals' rights and freedoms. In its 1993 report on this issue, EARC recommended that Queensland should adopt a Bill of Rights. For the reasons set out in this report, we have recommended that Queensland not adopt a Bill of Rights whether as proposed by EARC or in any other form. However, while we have recommended against Queensland adopting a Bill of Rights, this does not mean that we think rights protection in Queensland is perfect.

What our report focuses on is the need to educate and inform people about their rights and to clarify the rather complex ways in which citizens' rights are currently protected in Queensland. We hope that our handbook will be an important resource for use by and within places such as schools, communities, workplaces and Government and non-Government organisations throughout the State for many years to come. We have made a number of recommendations to see that this happens. In our report we also discuss the importance of enhancing a rights culture or consciousness in policy, in law and among decision makers at all levels of government in Queensland. In other words, we have looked at the issue of rights from a people-up basis.

I inform members that we will be holding a public launch of our handbook on the evening of 9 December 1998, being the eve of Human Rights Day, in the Legislative Assembly Chamber at Parliament House. We are pleased that Mr Tony Fitzgerald, AC, is available to be the keynote speaker for that event.

I also table two final submissions to this inquiry, which the committee has authorised for publication. On behalf of the current and former committee, which initiated this inquiry, I take this opportunity to thank all persons and organisations who dedicated their time to meet the committee or to make submissions to this important inquiry. Public submissions continue to provide us with invaluable guidance and insight into issues as they affect individual citizens and communities.

On behalf of the committee, I also take the opportunity to thank those who assisted us in preparing our report and handbooks, namely, the committee's research staff and Associate Professor

Bryan Horrigan of the Queensland Institute of Technology Faculty of Law. I thank also my fellow committee members for their hard work and enthusiasm during this inquiry. I commend the report to the House.
