



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR BARAMBAH

Hansard 9 December 1999

PROPERTY LAW AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs PRATT (Barambah—IND) (10.22 p.m.): The Property Law Amendment Bill, which relates to de facto couples, is to be commended except for one small section. No-one denies the right of all people to equal rights in the event of a breakdown in a relationship. As was stated earlier, de facto relationships are often the first step of a couple on the road to marriage. Sometimes these relationships fail, as do many marriages, and it is usually up to the courts to decide who gets what, where and how.

Looking at the speaker's list for this debate I noticed a contrast in comparison with previous Bills which have included same sex definitions for "spouse". I find it amusing that so many honourable members have become so quiet in respect of this Bill. I do not blame anyone. I suspect honourable members have their reasons for doing so.

This is a conscience vote. However, we are all here to represent the people who sent us to this Parliament. I have a stack of letters in my possession and I would like to read one of them to the House. The letter reads as follows—

"To The Premier
The Hon. Peter Beattie
Parliament House
Brisbane Qld 4000

Re: Recognition of homosexual relationships in Law

Dear Mr Beattie

On Friday, November 12th 1999 The minister, the Hon. Anna Bligh, tabled an amendment to the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Bill 1999. In this amendment Minister Bligh attempted to have the definition of 'a spouse' altered from 'a male and a female' to either 'one or two persons, whether of the same sex or opposite sex,'. This amendment was passed.

I hereby formally protest the inclusion of this definition of 'spouse' which desanctifies the honourable estate of marriage and deems it as equal to that of deviant and socially destroying behaviour. Although we tolerate homosexuality I do not want this activity legitimised by inclusion in legislation.

I ask that this amendment be removed from the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Bill 1999 forthwith."

Those 399 letters have all been signed. I seek leave to table these letters.

Leave granted.

Mrs PRATT: Those letters represent a strong message from my community. I believe the views of my constituents should be taken into account. The member for Kurwongbah stated that 12% of couples in Queensland are de facto couples. How many of those relationships are heterosexual and how many are homosexual? I believe homosexual couples would represent a very small percentage. The people who oppose the homosexual definition of "spouse" being enshrined in law are also members of the community and they deserve recognition.

Basically, that is all I want to say. As I have said previously in this House, I do not condone homosexual relationships, but I do not condemn them either. These people live with their own

consciences, as do all honourable members in this House. We must all stand up for our personal beliefs. I stand up for the people of my electorate who have asked me to come here and convey their message to this House.
