



Speech by

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Hansard 9 December 1999

PROPERTY LAW AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—IND) (10.37 p.m.): I rise to acknowledge the contribution that couples make in a relationship—both the man and the woman. In the past, the man worked almost exclusively outside the home and the woman stayed at home. However, I have to acknowledge that both worked. The old idea was that if a person was at home, that person must not have worked. However, working in a domestic situation is very hard work.

This situation has changed dramatically and many women now work outside the home in other occupations. Indeed, the shift has been quite dramatic. Some dads now stay at home while the wife, or the woman, goes out and works externally. I think it is important to acknowledge the contribution, both tangible and intangible, that people make to a relationship. If that acknowledgment can be achieved in this Bill, then I applaud the Minister for that.

In the past, I think the work that women did in particular when they stayed at home was greatly undervalued. A price was not attached to it. Some recent academic exercises have put a \$78,000 or \$80,000 a year price tag on the work undertaken by whichever one of the partners stays at home full time. So to say that if a relationship breaks up, the person who contributes financially to the relationship deserves all the recognition and the other person does not is a myth.

There is only one element to the Bill that I will be disagreeing with, and I guess that members opposite are expecting that. I would be surprised if they were not. In the view of most of my electorate and in my own view, the family remains as a man and a woman and their natural offspring. I appreciate that there are other points of view in this Chamber. However, the element of a homosexual or a lesbian relationship is not one that I can support. I will be supporting all the other elements of the Bill. However, I will be opposing that element of the Bill. I thank the Minister for the opportunity to speak on the legislation.
