



Speech by

PAUL LUCAS MLA

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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TRANSPLANTATION AND ANATOMY AMENDMENT BILL

Mr LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (8.45 p.m.): It gives me some pleasure to make a contribution to the debate tonight because the issue of organ donation and the wish to increase the level of organ donation in this State certainly is a very important issue. I say to the member for Thuringowa that I do note his genuineness in raising this issue. I think a number of his colleagues ought to take a leaf out of his book, at least in terms of looking at issues that the mainstream of Queensland would be concerned about. I do agree that the mainstream of Queensland would have a very considerable interest in this issue.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr LUCAS: The member opposite has an interest in Heiner. He is obsessed with Heiner. That is what his level of obsession is: nuances and frolics and conspiracy theories.

I certainly will give the member for Thuringowa some credit in terms of looking at an issue that the mainstream of people in Queensland certainly have an interest in. When I asked him earlier, the member for Burdekin said that he has indicated on his licence that he is a donor, as I have on mine. I hope that if and when I die——

Honourable members interjected.

Mr LUCAS: People are too eager to jump into the debate. If they listen, they might learn something. If, when I die, my body is suitable for donor use, I hope that I can be of some use to someone. I think that would be a very admirable thing to do. I know that some members on the other side of the House have already commenced the donation procedure by removing a few of their vital organs, that is their brains, but it is a very important thing for people to be able to make a contribution to their fellow members of society by allowing parts of their body to be used for donor purposes.

However, the fact is—and one has only to look at the media—that a number of problems have arisen as a result of donor situations. That does not mean that, at the end of the day, we do not do something about that. I have no problem with that at all. But if we are going to do something that is emotive and about which there is a range of opinions, it is important to do it properly. We are not here to cobble something, whack it in, see how it goes, "sounds like a good idea at the time", in this place we are legislating for things that last—things that are serious, things that will happen. It would be great if we could introduce legislation into this House that said that we will have no poverty tomorrow and we will have full employment and that sort of stuff, but we cannot. Government is far more complex than that. That is what we want to do. We want to make sure that when we do something about this, we do it right. If we do it right, we will not have the terrible situation that sometimes occurs in relation to donors about which we have read.

I have four young children and I would be mortified if they were in a situation in which they needed an urgent transplant of an organ and, due to a lack of organs, they were not able to get them. Of course no parent could live with a situation like that and be happy with it. However, the fact is that as a parent I can also understand that some parents have real problems when they are in the middle of a grieving process and someone comes to them and says, "Look, we would like to remove some organs from your child."

Mr Nelson: A four-year-old kid would not have a driver's licence.

Mr LUCAS: But the whole issue is what is important.

Mr Nelson: No.

Mr LUCAS: We do not do things in a piecemeal fashion. The member for Tablelands might. He might have legislation by coffee room discussion, but we——

Mr NELSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find that offensive and ask for it to be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Clark): Order! The member has asked that the member withdraw those statements that he finds offensive.

Mr LUCAS: That he has legislation by coffee room discussion?

Mr NELSON: Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I do not think he needs to repeat it. I find it highly offensive and ask that it be withdrawn unequivocally.

Mr LUCAS: Is that what the member finds offensive? I am sorry: I do withdraw that if he finds it offensive. We on this side of the House do not believe in legislation by whim. We believe in legislation that is well considered and well thought out, because we deal with very serious issues.

As I said before, as a parent I can see the problem I would have if any of my children needed an organ but, thankfully, I have never been in that situation. Nor have I been in the situation in which my children are on a life support system——

Mr NELSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading the House. Children do not have drivers' licences; adults have drivers' licences.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr NELSON: There is no provision here for children to have their organs removed by ticking a box on their driver's licence. It is ludicrous.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Mr LUCAS: I say to the member for Tablelands: it is better to have people suspect that you are a fool than be convinced of it.

Mr NELSON: Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I find that highly offensive and ask for it to be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Which words does the member find offensive?

Mr NELSON: The words that he just used about the member for Tablelands being a fool.

Mr LUCAS: I did not say that at all.

Mr NELSON: The member is misleading the House. That is exactly what he said. We could get Hansard to read it back right now. That is exactly what he said.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lytton has been asked to withdraw words that the member for Tablelands has found offensive.

Mr LUCAS: I will withdraw those words in deference to the Chair and in the interests of proceeding with the debate.

I do not know what it would be like to be in the situation of one of my young children, or my spouse—my spouse is well over 18—being on life support and me having to make the decision to turn the machine off and donate the organs. I do not want to be so presumptuous and arrogant as to start pontificating about what people should think in that situation. I actually think we should do a bit of research. I think there would be nothing better than to remove this issue from politics and look at it on a bipartisan basis so that we can actually legislate to make sure that decisions are made in people's best interests and that decisions are thoroughly thought out.

If the One Nation members and their fellow traveller Independents have a different view, that says more about their legislative skills than anything else. This is a very important issue and I think what is proposed by the Minister will give the House the opportunity to give the matter due consideration. I hope that we do end up in a situation whereby we can smooth over the issue of organ donation and increase the level of organ donation.

Using the logic of certain members opposite, if we really want to increase the level of organ donation we should adopt the US system where people pay for organs or the system of some of the Third World countries where people have their organs ripped off them! The member for Thuringowa has raised some very important issues that are worthy of very serious consideration, and he and the people of this State who are the potential beneficiaries of organs are owed the opportunity for this House to develop a considered view.
