



Speech by

**DESLEY BOYLE**

**MEMBER FOR CAIRNS**

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Hansard 27 November 2001

**CONSTITUTION OF QUEENSLAND; PARLIAMENT OF QUEENSLAND BILL**

**Ms BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (4.18 p.m.): I am pleased indeed to speak on the Constitution of Queensland 2001 Bill and its companion bill, the Parliament of Queensland Bill 2001. That Queensland does not currently have a consolidated or single act that sets out the state's constitutional arrangements is an anomaly of history. Apart from the contents of the Constitution Act of 1867, matters of state constitutional significance are currently contained in about 10 other principal acts which are mostly drafted in archaic language. The need, therefore, for modernisation and consolidation of the Constitution has been apparent for some time. In fact, it has taken some eight years to complete what is before us today. This has involved an independent commission as well as activity at the parliamentary committee level and, most recently, by the government.

I remind members that it was a 1998 Beattie government election commitment to consolidate the Queensland Constitution along the lines recommended by LCARC and therefore we reach this position today. After the 1998 election I was privileged to be appointed to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee and to serve there during the last term of parliament. The consolidation of the bills into the Queensland Constitution Bill took much of the committee's time during that period. I pay tribute to all who did the hard work. I must say that I was not one of them. My best attempts at making a contribution were, unfortunately, somewhat lacking because of my having such limited expertise in managing the archaic language, the legal implications of changes to the language and in struggling to put together the very complex and different acts which had been part of our history.

I am not known for always speaking in praise of lawyers, either in this House or in other places. From time to time, I have suggested that the legal point of view is too limited. On this particular occasion, however, I would like to pay my respects to all those lawyers who have been involved in this matter. I particularly refer to those lawyers who are associated with the committee secretariat, lawyers from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, lawyers associated with the Clerk of the Parliament's office and those from Crown Law. I also wish to praise the consultants, external to government, who have contributed. Their endeavours are appreciated and their expertise on this occasion is particularly recognised.

This legislation gives us simplification, accessibility and modernisation. These matters are all very important if we are to achieve better civic education about democracy and the basis for our democracy in Queensland. The two acts which we are now debating are very practical. Following this debate and, presumably, the passage of the bills through this House, and following the declaration on Queensland Day 2002—as is planned—I hope it will enable all Queenslanders to know about our Queensland Constitution. It will enable Queenslanders to take pride in our Constitution and to recognise the very important basis for democracy in this fine state.

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