



Speech by

# Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Wednesday, 25 November 2009

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction Reform and Modernisation Amendment Bill

**Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.55 am): The Australian Labor Party has a well-deserved reputation as being the party of reform and the Bligh government is continuing this tradition as it seeks to respond to emerging challenges and to make decisions that will help build a safe, modern and vibrant Queensland. This approach extends to the Justice portfolio, where we have been implementing many reforms to modernise our court system. Today I announce the next phase of our reform agenda. Last year, the Honourable Martin Moynihan, former Senior Judge Administrator of the Supreme Court, conducted a wide-ranging review of the Queensland justice system. His report contained 60 recommendations aimed at making more effective use of public resources within the system. The report and the Queensland government's response were released on 21 July 2009.

The government has now developed a bill implementing the first stage of reforms in response to the report. The key reforms in this bill expand the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the District Court and Magistrates Court, streamline the committal process, and provide greater encouragement for defendants to enter a plea of guilty at the earliest reasonable opportunity. This legislation will have significant benefits for Queensland courts, the legal profession and the community generally. I now table a consultation draft of the Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction Reform and Modernisation Amendment Bill 2009 and explanatory notes.

*Tabled paper:* Consultation draft of the Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction Reform and Modernisation Amendment Bill [[1476](#)].

*Tabled paper:* Consultation draft of the Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction Reform and Modernisation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [[1477](#)].

The issues canvassed by Mr Moynihan have been a matter of concern for some time and extensive consultation was undertaken in the review. I believe this bill fairly balances the needs of all stakeholders, the community and the interests of justice in Queensland. A significant benefit of the legislation is enabling litigants and defendants to have more matters heard and determined in the District Court and Magistrates Court. The reforms are designed to ensure a more appropriate and effective use of resources across the justice system. In particular, they will help manage the workload of cases in the Supreme and District courts by allowing those courts to focus on more serious and complex matters. Comments and feedback on the bill are due by 31 January 2010. The government anticipates that the final version of the bill will be introduced into the Legislative Assembly early next year.