



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Thursday, 20 May 2010

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Surrogacy Act

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.18 am): Following a lengthy debate earlier this year and a conscience vote that was only exercised by government members, the Surrogacy Bill was passed, marking a milestone for Queensland. This new law was based on the framework that was developed by an all-party parliamentary committee that conducted a detailed investigation into this issue in 2008.

Before passage of the bill, Queensland was the only state in Australia where altruistic surrogacy was a crime punishable by jail. As a result of that significant day in February, I am pleased to announce today that the Surrogacy Act 2010 will commence on 1 June this year. From that date, people who have been unable to start a family in the past will now have a chance to experience the joy of becoming parents without the fear of facing criminal sanction. Importantly, commercial surrogacy will continue to remain unlawful in Queensland, as will advertising for surrogacy and the payment or receipt of fees relating to making a surrogacy arrangement.

The Surrogacy Act 2010 also provides a legal mechanism that will allow the intended parents of a child born as a result of a surrogacy arrangement to be legally recognised. This means that any child born under a surrogacy arrangement will enjoy the same status, protection, privileges and support as other children irrespective of the circumstances of their birth or the status of the people who raise them.

This Labor government believes in equality. Our surrogacy laws do not discriminate and do not exclude people from becoming parents. It is not up to government to decide who will make good parents. We simply want every child—every child—to be raised in a loving, nurturing and supportive environment, and our laws allow that to happen.

With the pending start of our surrogacy laws, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General is conducting some targeted communication activities to inform prospective parents about the new arrangements. Letters outlining details of the new law will be sent to key stakeholders such as the Queensland Law Society, the Australian and New Zealand Infertility Counsellors Association and the Queensland Fertility Group. Information materials have also been prepared for the department's website including links to forms that have been developed as part of the legislation.

1 June is a momentous day for Queenslanders who have been unable to have children of their own, and I am confident that the new surrogacy laws will bring them closer to experiencing the joys of parenthood.