



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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SURROGACY BILL; FAMILY (SURROGACY) BILL

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (3.59 pm): I rise to speak to the Surrogacy Bill and Family (Surrogacy) Bill cognate debate. On 8 October 2008 the committee tabled in the Legislative Assembly its report investigating the decriminalisation and regulation of altruistic surrogacy in Queensland. The key recommendations of the report included: that altruistic surrogacy be decriminalised in Queensland subject to a regulatory framework; that the government's role should include implementing legislative reform, including a mechanism to transfer legal parentage; that altruistic surrogacy arrangements should be unenforceable under state law; that a genetic connection between the intended parents and the child should not be a prescribed requirement; and that births are re-registered after the transfer of legal parentage for a child and children have access to their original birth certificate when they turn 18 years of age.

The report made no specific recommendation to legalise altruistic surrogacy for single people or same-sex couples. I want to put on the record my opposition to the Surrogacy Bill, which allows same-sex parenting, introduced by the Labor government that allows adults over 25, including a single man or woman or gay couples, to obtain a child of their own using reproductive technology allowing two women or two men to be the baby's parents. The Surrogacy Bill should have been about altruistic surrogacy for infertile heterosexual couples. But, no! Labor slipped in an oppressive proposal to deprive children of their birthright—their fundamental right to enter the world, as all of us did, with both a mother and a father. It is despicable and unbelievable that any government would try to deny a child of their most profound emotional need, and that is to have a mum and a dad in their life. It would be sad for a child to be brought up, with the support of government, asking what a mum is.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child affirms that a child must not, save in the most exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother, and Labor's bill does exactly that: in a premeditated way, a little girl shall live without a mother purely to satisfy the desire of two homosexual men to have a baby of their own. What then of the rights of the child? I support the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's private member's bill that allows surrogacy arrangements for married or de facto couples who have been together for two years, as exists under the Adoption Act 2009. Children born as a result of such arrangements would be cared for, protected and nurtured with input into the child's development from both a mother and a father. Any other parental combination is not acceptable to the majority of Australians according to a Galaxy poll conducted in November 2009, which found that 86 per cent of Australians believe that, wherever possible, children should be raised by their biological mother and biological father. In the case of an eligible surrogacy, the child would be raised by both mother and father and would be subject to the same loving care as children born naturally.

The right, where it does exist, starts and finishes with the child, who has the right to be brought up with contributions from both male and female parents. Babies are not toys. They are future adults whose lives will have been shaped by their upbringing. Every generation has the responsibility to ensure that children are given the best possible start to life and continuing advantages throughout childhood. Rights and responsibilities are inseparable. The right to have a child cannot be separated from the responsibility

to provide an optimum environment for that developing child. Overwhelmingly, Australians believe that is to include both a mother and a father.

Allowing single persons and same-sex couples to obtain a child through surrogacy will change the definition of a family. No government has the right to do that. Governments have a responsibility—in this case a responsibility to maintain accepted standards of morality and expectations within a community. Changing standards to suit minority groups is unethical and dangerous. This will be welcome news for those Queensland heterosexual couples who cannot naturally have children but who want more than anything to start a family and be called ‘mum’ or ‘dad’. As I said, changing standards to suit minority groups is unethical and dangerous. This equates to social engineering which will have far-reaching consequences. Social engineering is not the role of government, and the majority of Australians demand that government fulfil its obligations and responsibilities by protecting accepted values, not changing them.

The LNP’s legislation will ensure that the dream is kept alive for these Queenslanders through access to altruistic surrogacy. The LNP believes that proposed laws designed for hopeful mothers and fathers should not be tied to the passage of proposed laws pertaining to same-sex parenting and that all proposed laws must properly balance the rights of the child with the rights of the parents. I encourage government members to support the Family (Surrogacy) Bill introduced by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and fully oppose the government’s Surrogacy Bill 2009.