



Speech by


**Mark Ryan**

**MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD**

Hansard Wednesday, 30 November 2011

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## **CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS BILL**

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (10.05 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Civil Partnerships Bill. At the outset, I take this opportunity to thank the people who took the time to contact me about their views on this bill. One local resident, Mr Frank Tarr, asked me to record his personal opposition to this bill. Mr Tarr should consider his opposition so recorded.

It is important to note that this bill is not about changing the definition of marriage. The Australian Constitution provides that only the Commonwealth parliament can change that definition. As a practising Catholic, I have given great thought and consideration to the provisions of this bill. I have prayerfully and conscientiously reflected on this matter and my conscience. In my view, this bill is about legal recognition and ceremony for relationships that already exist in our community. I note that these relationships, which are the subject of this bill, are not illegal in our community. Any couple, irrespective of their sexuality, will be able to access the civil union framework established by this bill. The framework established by the bill does not discriminate between heterosexual and same-sex couples.

This bill is about justice, equality and the legal recognition of commitment. On this very point, I note the recent statement of the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster on behalf of the bishops of England and Wales. Archbishop Nichols said—

We would want to emphasise that civil partnerships actually provide a structure in which people of the same sex who want a lifelong relationship and a lifelong partnership can find their place and protection and legal provision.

Earlier this year, Jesuit priest Father Frank Brennan wrote in an opinion piece—

There are homosexual persons who enter into loving, faithful and committed relationships. These persons should be able to live in society free from discrimination, without state interference and with state support and approval.

I note that the Social Responsibilities Committee of the Anglican Church of Australia, Brisbane diocese submitted this in respect of the bill—

Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all.

Finally, I note that paragraph 2358 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church provides that homosexual persons—

... must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.

My vision for Queensland is that together we can continue to build open, tolerant, supportive, understanding and compassionate communities where we together promote an agenda to ensure that all Queenslanders—all people—are treated equally irrespective of their marital status, sexuality, race or religion. This bill contributes to making Queensland a fairer place to live for all Queenslanders irrespective of their sexual orientation. In supporting the Civil Partnerships Bill, I do so in my belief that I act in good conscience.