



Speech by

**Hon. Mark McArdle**

**MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA**

Hansard Thursday, 21 June 2012

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## **CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (9.46 pm): Let the record show that the member for Dalrymple supports the law as it currently stands—the same man who turned his back on the LNP not all that long ago and ran with his tail between his legs. I listened to the contribution by the member for South Brisbane, and I could not believe it when she used the phrase ‘Andrew Fraser’s leadership’. ‘Andrew Fraser’s leadership’! How high is that dollar stack at the moment, Premier?

**Mr Newman:** One hundred and sixty!

**Mr McARDLE:** One hundred and sixty kilometres. That is the leadership of Andrew Fraser! That is what he led this state to via his magnificent leadership! Andrew Fraser won his seat in the campaign on 7 February 2004, and from that day until late in 2011 he never raised an issue in relation to same-sex couples—never said a word in relation to same-sex couples. Suddenly with an election looming, he leapt into the chamber all agog with a bill that he thought just might get him and the Labor Party over the line. There is no doubt it was a ruse. It was a political ploy to look for votes from a man who, through his own leadership, had sunk this state into incredible debt. So please, member for South Brisbane, do not try to con us with the leadership of Andrew Fraser. The man was a dud and he only did it for a stunt and nothing else.

It is also true that the member for South Brisbane was up in the gallery tonight. Does anybody here believe that the member was not up there stirring the possum?

**Ms TRAD:** I rise to a point of order.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! All members need to cease interjecting until I hear this point of order.

**Ms TRAD:** I have placed on record exactly what I was doing. I find those remarks personally offensive and I ask for them to be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I heard no personal offence in that. There is no point of order.

**Mr McARDLE:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Perhaps the member could identify what it was that was personally offensive.

**Ms TRAD:** I found the remarks that he made that I was up there inciting the crowd personally offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr McARDLE:** I rise to a point of order. I never used the word ‘inciting’ at all.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member has asked for a withdrawal. Perhaps the minister might feel that he could withdraw and we can move on. But I do make the point to the member for South Brisbane that I will not be tolerant—

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Is that as good as it gets?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition! I warn the Leader of the Opposition under 253A. I will not be tolerant of points of order if they turn out to be frivolous. I will warn the member on the next occasion if it does turn out to be frivolous. On this occasion I have asked the minister to withdraw.

**Mr McARDLE:** I withdraw. There is no doubt that the member was in the gallery. There is no doubt that the gallery erupted into vocal violence. Those are two distinct but accurate facts and I put on record now that the member is now smiling. Let this chamber come to its own conclusions as to a connection between those two facts. Let this chamber judge the member upon those two facts. Everybody in this House acknowledges the right to demonstrate and to also put their point of view across. However, what we saw tonight was an absolute disgrace. I believe it is a clear indication of the ALP's attitude towards democracy in this state. They will use any trick, any method, any way to try to get their message across no matter who it hurts or who suffers because of it.

The member also said some other things which I think are absolutely appalling. In some manner she was trying to compare this bill to what occurred in Nazi Germany before World War II.

**A government member:** Shame!

**Mr McARDLE:** That is an absolutely shameful situation and a shameful statement. Last night the member stood in this House and claimed that the LNP did not care for children. Now she is trying to connect the atrocities of Nazi Germany to this chamber, and that is an appalling situation, a disgusting situation and a situation that we have come to expect from the member over and over again. It is hard to believe that a member can be so full of hate and hatred that she can stand and make an allegation along those lines. It is an appalling slight on her character but, more importantly, an appalling slight on the ALP for preselecting her to stand for the seat of South Brisbane. That member should be apologising for what she has said in this chamber, both tonight and last night, but I guarantee she will not be doing so.

What the ALP do best is twist the truth and take any trick, take any method, take any plan to achieve their own goals. Unfortunately, that is epitomised in the member for South Brisbane and her attitude to this chamber and how things should be conducted. When this chamber voted on the act in late 2011 the LNP made it clear that it opposed the terms of the bill as it then stood, and one of the basic reasons was that it mimicked marriage. The LNP policy is very clear: we do not support same-sex marriage—it is as simple as that—and neither does Julia Gillard, neither does the Prime Minister. However, I have not heard one member of the ALP on their feet tonight condemning her for her stand. I did not hear one member of the ALP saying that she was wrong in any way, shape or form. They are selective in whom they attack and do not attack. They do not attack the Prime Minister because she is one of them, but they are prepared to attack anybody else on this side of the House who holds a different point of view. Hypocrisy upon hypocrisy—upon hypocrisy—and that is the ALP.

In the election campaign the LNP made it quite clear that we would review this act if we were elected but we also made it very clear that we were aware that rights were enacted as a consequence of the act coming into force and that we would find a balance between the two and move forward in that vein, and that is exactly what we did. We looked at the act. We took on board the fact that marriage between a man and a woman is what the LNP believes in and not same-sex marriage. We took that principle on board and the bill tonight does three things. One, it affirms the opposition to a process that mimics marriage. That is, it opposes a process that puts in place a ceremony and a divorce application procedure, as exists under the current act. Secondly, it provides for continuity of recognition of the rights of people who are registered under the terms of the current act and, thirdly, it allowed further couples, both same-sex and male-female couples, to register under the act and gain the rights achieved by way of registration. In my opinion, this particular bill that we are debating tonight upholds the spirit of the legislation; it upholds the spirit of allowing a couple—same-sex, male or female—to register their relationship and thereby acquire rights under the terms of the act that flow as a consequence thereof.

Everybody in this chamber knows men and women who are either gay or heterosexual. We all know people like that. We all have had conversations with them. I can guarantee that everybody in this House will have had conflicting stories given to them based upon who they talk to. Gay men and women have said to me that they are torn between whether the act does anything at all, whether they want to use it and whether it is rubbish. Quite clearly only 600 couples have registered under the terms of this act. Of those, 158 are heterosexual. Therefore, 451 gay couples have used the act, but there are thousands of gay couples out there. I do not think that trying to say that a bill that guarantees gay couples the right of registration of its own merit is sufficient to constitute continuation of the act. In my opinion, what the act does do is secure those rights for those people who wish to utilise the terms thereof.

Sadly, the debate tonight has focused purely on the fact of same-sex relationships to the detriment of the rights garnered by couples who register under the terms of the act. That is the true purpose of this act. At the end of the night the LNP had made a statement very clearly during the election campaign as to what we were going to do. There should be no surprises. We made it absolutely crystal clear that we would

review this act. We went out there on the election campaign and made that commitment to the electorate over and over again. What we did was take a balanced perspective. We understood the rights that had been given by the terms of the act to those people who had made an application and were registered and we secured those rights but then further went on to secure and garner rights for other people who wish to use the terms of the act. The ALP have tried to turn this into a same-sex relationship issue. It is not; it is the issue of rights being garnered for people who want to use the terms of the act. The bill we are debating tonight simply puts in place a common-sense alteration of the terms and secures rights for many other couples for years to come. I support the bill.