




Speech By  
**Hon. Jarrod Bleijie**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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### **SUCCESSION TO THE CROWN BILL**

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.33 pm), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Succession to the Crown Bill 2013. The objective of these reforms has been agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments—COAG—as I said earlier. They are being implemented in the United Kingdom through the recently passed Succession to the Crown Act 2013. The bill reflects the government decision to give effect to the measures in the United Kingdom legislation by an approach that involves substantially uniform and coordinated state legislation and complementary Commonwealth legislation.

I echo the commentary by members on this side of the House in terms of the enduring relationship that Queensland has had and will continue to have in the future with the monarch, particularly Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. We have strengthened this relationship in the last 12 months in this state. We have gone through a process whereby we have re-established the title of Queen's Counsel in this state. We have gone back to processes of naming buildings after Her Majesty—namely, the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law, a majestic \$570 million building named after Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. What we have seen in this process is that there is certainly at the federal level an attempt to bypass Fernberg Road and the Queen's representative in this state, the Governor, through the Governor-General's office in Canberra.

We believe fundamentally in the right of Queensland as a sovereign state to liaise directly with Her Majesty, her heirs and successors through the Queen's representative in this state—the Governor. So we do have concerns. The federal approach to these things is that the federal government through the Governor-General's office should have more of a say about what happens between the Queensland government and Her Majesty. We do not agree. That is why we went about directly communicating with the Palace through the Queen's representative, the Governor, in order to have approval from Her Majesty to name the new building the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law. Similarly, I was pleased to write to Her Majesty with respect to the reintroduction of Queen's Counsel in this great state. Her Majesty replied through her Chief Secretary, noting that Her Majesty was pleased to receive the news that Queensland was reintroducing the title of Queen's Counsel and in fact wanted to be kept updated and abreast of the issue. I am happy to advise that in the next couple of weeks that process will be instigated and senior counsels will then have the option to transfer to the title of Queen's Counsel.

I turn now to address issues raised by the opposition leader particularly, and I thank the opposition leader for her contribution. It is not often in a sitting week of parliament that I get support on one piece of legislation, let alone two. I cannot recall if I scored the three this week with regard to my bills, but I think we got two out of three, which ain't bad. But I do want to say to the opposition leader that in the spirit of cooperation in these debates where the opposition supports us she should temper the member for Bundamba in her contributions, because I note that during the member for Bundamba's contribution the opposition leader was so disgusted that she could not even look up

when the member for Bundamba was making that dreadful contribution today. The member for Bundamba was casting aspersions on all sorts of people—not only the royal family and her local constituents but also me personally in terms of some of her comments, which I will deal with later.

In terms of the opposition leader's question with respect to the process and why we are doing it, we believe in the fundamental principle of Queensland as a sovereign state. We believe fundamentally in that principle. That is why Queensland's position originally was to absolutely go it alone. Lawyers and so forth can talk about this until the cows come home, but at the end of the day someone has to act and someone has to take the first step. Queensland was particularly pleased that we took the first step of any of the jurisdictions in Australia. We took the first step to acknowledge the fact that a firstborn child, if it is a little girl, can become the reigning monarch of the Commonwealth. We took that first step and I am proud that this government took that step. What we have then seen is a debate from other states. We were anticipating that other states might then pass their own legislation—that is, copy the model law as we did and introduce their own legislation. They failed to act in that regard—failed to act as Queensland did—so what the Premier took to COAG was the form of a hybrid model which essentially said that Queensland will still have its own legislation. He said that we will pass our own legislation in relation to succession, as we are debating today, but we will add a chapter in the spirit of cooperation but without disregarding our legislation—our bill—before the parliament. He said that we would add a chapter that essentially says under section 51(xxxviii) that we will also request the Commonwealth to do the same. We therefore believe we have got all the states and territories on board with the hybrid model.

It may be the case, though, that the other states and territories simply pass a bill through their parliaments to request the Commonwealth to do it. I would discourage them from doing that. I would encourage the states and territories to do what Queensland has done and have their own legislation stamping in black and white the relationship that exists between the states and territories and the sovereign. We will wait and see, but I am pleased that we have waited until the House of Lords considered this matter, which it did a couple of weeks ago. There was a debate in the House of Lords and now we have the opportunity.

Colleagues, we are the first state and jurisdiction in Australia to pass legislation if it is passed this afternoon. We will be the first to take this important step to make sure that little girls can become successors to the Crown if they had a brother who was born after them. Despite gender, little girls will be able to become the monarch.

So I say to the Leader of the Opposition that, yes, there were positions that had been formulated, but it was essentially going to COAG. We wanted a position going from COAG so that the Premier could stand with the leaders of the other states and territories knowing that we had a solid position on the matter. The solid position is this: we will have our own legislation. We will also do the request and we will wait and see what the other states and territories do. I encourage the other Attorneys-General and first ministers to ensure that they have their own legislation.

Essentially, this is the model bill that was agreed at COAG. There were two processes. The request could have been made and the states would pass a request bill under the Constitution. We have a hybrid model in place now where we are doing our own but we also do the request so that the Commonwealth can go and do what it needs to do. No doubt, the Commonwealth's legislation will reflect the Queensland legislation that we anticipate will be passed shortly.

I thank honourable members for their contributions. I thank my honourable colleague to my right, the member for Hinchinbrook, the honourable Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. As he indicated in his brief contribution—but he tabled the remainder of his speech—Her Majesty's personal representative in Queensland was only down the corridor and being advised by Her Majesty's Queensland ministers. I think it is great that we were having a debate at the same time that Her Majesty's personal representative in this state was being advised by Her Majesty's Queensland ministers on important matters of state. So I thank the honourable minister for completing that duty. It is good to see him back in the chamber for the final elements of this debate.

Earlier this year I was particularly pleased to travel to Longreach and Winton, in the electorate of the honourable member for Gregory, to visit and meet with Prince Charles, the future King, and the Duchess of Cornwall. I enjoyed the community barbecue, which was held in Longreach style. I thank the member for Gregory for his hospitality both in Winton and Longreach. I think the Prince and the Duchess of Cornwall were most pleased to be there, despite the hot weather. We know that the royal family have a strong connection to Queensland. I am advised that the royal family love to come to Queensland whenever they have the opportunity. We have seen Prince William travel to the electorate of the honourable member for Hinchinbrook after Cyclone Yasi. The royal family has a

special place in the hearts of Queenslanders. Whenever the royal family visits it certainly lifts the spirits of our communities. That is also a great role that our Governor plays. I pay particular tribute to our Governor. In midst of the floods after Australia Day, the Governor travelled throughout the state to talk to affected communities. It really lifts the spirit of these communities to have Her Majesty's representative go out to see them. So I pay tribute to Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland.

I also want to say that Her Majesty, in the Diamond Jubilee year of her coronation, has been an exemplary leader in her 60 years on the throne. She shows the qualities that one should aspire to in terms of leadership. So I thank the members on this side of the House who paid particular tribute to our reigning monarch. I thank the member for Broadwater whose goal in life is to marry Prince Harry.

**Miss Barton** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We will wait to see what happens there. I also congratulate the member for giving us the incredibly proud history of Queen Victoria and the naming of this great state.

Colleagues, I am not even going to give the time to respond to the woeful contribution of the member for Bundamba. She does not deserve it. It was an attack on not only everyone in the royal family but also everyone in this chamber. There were elements of homophobia in there as well, which I will deal with at a later stage. I am not going to give the time of day to respond to the contribution of the member for Bundamba. I think she is an embarrassment to the opposition and to this parliament.

I thank the member for Logan for his contribution. It is great to see that he is a proud Queensland and a proud monarchist. He also paid tribute to the Australian Monarchist League, which I do today as well, being an honorary life member of the Australian Monarchist League. My honourable ministerial colleague is a member of the Australians for Constitutional Monarchy. They are great organisations. I acknowledge other members who are also proud members of those associations.

I thank the members for Kallangur and Toowoomba North for their contributions. I never thought we would hear cricket mentioned in a debate about royal succession, but the member for Lytton did that. He did well and I thank him for his contribution.

In conclusion, in my second reading speech I referred to the fact that, in the spirit of compromise, following further discussions with the Commonwealth and the states at the COAG meeting, the government agreed to amend its bill to include a request. That was in a spirit of cooperation and hoping that the other states move on with this important issue. As I said, I will be moving amendments to give effect to that in consideration in detail and also a few other amendments. I thank all honourable members for this debate. I think it has been a worthy debate. I am very proud that Queensland will be the first state to move to make sure that little girls can become monarchs. They deserve to be just as much as their little brothers.