




Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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**RELATIONSHIPS (CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS) AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT  
BILL**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (3.12 pm): I rise to speak in support of this bill. When Labor defeated the Newman government earlier this year there was much to do in the state of Queensland. After three years under Campbell Newman there were many wrongs to right, and today I am proud to be standing in this House speaking in support of this bill that rights one of the cruellest wrongs of the Newman government. As a mother, I understand how important it is for us to recognise diversity in our children. Last month I attended a rally in Ipswich organised by the Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, PFLAG.

I spoke about the importance of equality in a just and civilised society. My reiteration of the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to reinstate civil partnerships in Queensland was met with cheers of joy from the participants at the rally. They know how important this decision is for the lives of so many Queenslanders and their families, friends and supporters.

This bill reinstates civil partnership ceremonies for couples of any gender. The civil ceremony allows couples to make a formal commitment to each other in front of their loved ones and celebrate the love and value they bring to each other's lives. The intention of this bill is not to replicate or devalue marriage. It provides couples who are not married with an opportunity to hold an official ceremony to acknowledge and celebrate their commitment.

Ceremonies hold meanings for each and every one of us. We commemorate many significant moments in our lives—births, anniversaries, deaths and marriages. To remove the rights of same-sex couples to celebrate their union through a formal ceremony is simply cruel and discriminatory. These amendments are about fairness and supporting the equality and dignity of all Queenslanders. While the fight for marriage equality continues in the federal sphere, here in Queensland we can make a difference. We can make a difference by recognising the rights of same-sex couples in Queensland to commemorate their union and their love for each other. I commend the bill to the House.