




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.01 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. I support this bill. This bill restores dignity to adult couples of any gender who wish to show their commitment and love for one another in a publicly recorded ceremony. This bill also restores respectful language when referring to the couple's commitment. The term 'partnership' will be reinstated instead of the term 'relationship'. The term 'partnership' is reserved for relationships that are close and special. It is important for couples to have a legal ceremony that is recognised and not to have to continually prove that they are in a de facto relationship for state and Commonwealth purposes.

When the former LNP government abolished civil partnership ceremonies, there were couples who had already taken part in a civil partnership. They had experienced the joy of declaring their commitment for one another in front of family and friends. They went through the process of preparing for their ceremony, choosing flowers and outfits, sending out invitations—just like any other couple preparing to publicly declare their commitment and love. They were devastated to have their status as a couple diluted to a mere registration.

I have seen firsthand the hurt caused to couples and their families. A former work colleague of mine, Shannon, and her partner, with their joint families, were devastated and bewildered that the joy they had shared at their ceremony was snatched away from them. Their parents, brothers and sisters, and friends stood proudly with them and celebrated their happiness on the day of their ceremony. The message that this couple's parents got from the former LNP government's removal of the civil partnership ceremony provisions was that their daughter's partnership with her chosen lifelong partner was of no importance—in fact, it was an illegitimate partnership in the eyes of the government.

The amendments of this bill will reinstate the status of partnership ceremonies for couples like Shannon and her partner who want a dignified ceremony with their community. This bill gives couples seeking a civil partnership stability. Stable relationships make stable communities. I commend the bill.