




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

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

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (12.04 pm): I rise to support the Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015. It is a bill that delivers on the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to give couples of any gender the right to celebrate an official ceremony while having their relationship formally recognised. I think it is a very important principle that people should have an equal role in our society no matter what their orientation or background. One of the great things I have seen in my time as an adult over the last 20 years is the social progress that acknowledges that people from an LGBTI background are equal members of our community and they should have equal rights—just as over the last 40 or 50 years people from different racial backgrounds have been accepted by the mainstream community—that everyone should have an equal go and a fair go in our community. In the same vein, women have been recognised as equal members of our community. We have seen tremendous social progress in the last 50 years and I see this reform in that light.

I see today a range of things that I think are worth noting. I acknowledge the previous reforms brought in by former premier Bligh and former treasurer Andrew Fraser in 2011. They recognised that the time was here for those rights to be recognised to the extent that the Queensland parliament could do so. I accept that this is not necessarily related to marriage; this will allow people from all backgrounds to register their relationships. Not everyone wants to be married, not everyone is religious, but people should have the right to make those decisions without discrimination.

One of the reasons we are here though is because of the failure of the federal parliament. While we have seen marriage equality reforms happen in other countries—and New Zealand's reforms were particularly remarkable and very moving, I might add—what we have seen in Australia is a continuing failure of the federal government to keep pace with the views of the Australian community on this. That is absolutely shameful. It is time the federal parliament got with the program and acknowledged that the Australian community and the Queensland community believes and strongly supports that LGBTI people should have the same rights as everyone else in this community. So I see this bill very much in that broader light and I think it is unfortunate that some people still see it from a myopic point of view—that somehow this is all about tactics. I think it shows a really base point of view from some members.

This is a sign of social progress, and I acknowledge the role of the opposition leader in allowing a free vote. I think that is a positive move and I acknowledge that that is a good move. It is a leadership move from him and I acknowledge that that is a sign of progress. In that light, I welcome the views of a range of members opposite who will be supporting this bill, and I note the member for Clayfield, the member for Mansfield and the member for Noosa, who very courageously put his position out there a few months ago. I acknowledge his role in terms of providing leadership on the other side of the House. As a sign of social progress, the member for Kawana finally came around—after it was some of his

work that took away those rights of people in Queensland in 2012, and that was a very sad and sorry situation.

It is not the role of this parliament to interfere in the rights of people in their relationships. It really is not. This parliament should be supporting people, especially in a situation of a relationship where it is a matter of commitment and love between people. People should be supported in those measures. People should be free of judgement. That is what a modern and contemporary community is all about. It is very important for the parliament to send out those signals to the community about what is reasonable, to support those people and to help them be equal members of our community. That is what this bill does.

I am very proud to be part of a government that is persistent about implementing our values in this regard. My side of politics introduced this in 2011. We are very proud of that. It was not for tactical reasons. It was because we deeply believe in equal rights—we still do—and that is what today is about. We cannot sit around waiting for the federal government. The federal government should get on with it. If the Prime Minister wants to differentiate himself from the previous prime minister, he should allow a conscience vote right now on the issue of marriage equality. Let us get on with this in this country in terms of making it very clear that every member of our community should have the same equal rights as other members of the community. It is not the role of the state to judge people and discriminate against people based on their sexual orientation, gender or race.

This is the 21st century. We should value the contribution of everybody. We should be very clear about the signals we put out as a government that that is what our values are. We see those values, I might add, under challenge in a violent way in many other parts of the country. So let's be clear about supporting those values here. Not only does that send a signal to our community and Queenslanders, but more broadly it sends a signal about what social progress is, what social inclusion should be about. I am very proud to support this bill. I look forward to its passage not only with the support of this government but also with the support of some of the members opposite.