



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 September 2015

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Adoption Act, Review**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.15 am): In 2010 a new modernised Adoption Act commenced. It represented major reform to adoption legislation in Queensland. The reforms introduced profound changes that saw adoption in Queensland aligning with contemporary practices in Australia and internationally. Changes included removing discrimination based on marital status, introducing open adoption, information access and, most importantly, judicial oversight for the making of adoption orders. These may not have been new ideas but they were badly needed reforms in Queensland.

At that time, the government committed to reviewing the act five years on. I am pleased to advise the House that we are meeting that commitment with today's release of a discussion paper on the operations of the Adoption Act.

Since the commencement of the act, Queensland and Australia have experienced major events in the adoption space, most notably formal apologies by both governments for past forced adoption practices. It is vital that we continue to reflect on the lessons made available through the experiences of those affected by past forced adoptions.

Adoption is and will remain a service for children and will be carried out in the best interests of children. We must also ensure our adoption laws reflect contemporary approaches and are based on sound evidence. That evidence includes the lived experiences of people, especially those who have or sought to engage with our adoption laws.

I am pleased to say that we have already received some great feedback. Stakeholders are telling me Adoption Services Queensland is doing great work. During a recent Brisbane Children's Court matter, adoptive parents made special mention to the magistrate of the positive support they had received over the years from Adoptions Services staff. While this feedback is encouraging, we must ensure that we ask the tough questions to see if we can do better. Consultation on this discussion paper will be held over a six-month period. The discussion paper will be available from the get involved website.

The review of the operation of the act will consider the impact of changes in the field of adoption since the act was introduced, as well as reforms underway in other jurisdictions. The review will specifically look at: how our new consent requirements have worked; how our eligibility criteria to adopt has impacted on couples wanting to adopt, including those excluded from expressing interest; and how open adoption and information processes have been working over the past five years.

I know that in the community there is a multitude of views. I look forward to constructive feedback from all members of the community and members of this House.