




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 3 December 2015

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

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (12.25 pm): I am proud to rise in support of the Relationships (Civil Partnerships) and Other Acts Amendment Bill. I support the restoration of civil partnerships and I encourage others to do so as well. The responsibility of marriage or marriage-like partnerships is a very personal experience between consenting adults. It can be hard work at times, but when it is fulfilled by caring adults with mutual respect, love and devotion to each other it can be one of the most rewarding choices we make in life. I do not believe same-sex couples should be denied the opportunity to express that love and commitment before their friends and family.

As leaders of our community, we must not get out of step with the attitudes and expectations of the people that we represent here in this place, and there is overwhelming community support for this. Communities around the world are changing to provide marriage equality. Marriage equality laws have been passed in many countries including Canada, the United Kingdom, France, New Zealand and the United States, and I hope that Australia joins these countries soon with our own marriage equality laws. Australia's Marriage Act 1961 is the responsibility of the federal government, and while I am not able to directly vote to change this law, as a state member of parliament I am proud to support the re-instatement of state sanctioned civil ceremonies as part of Queensland's current civil union laws.

During the recent state election the Premier made the commitment that a Labor government would restore the system of recognition of civil ceremonies for same-sex couples put in place by the Bligh Labor government that were removed by the Newman LNP government, and today we are delivering on that promise. We do know that we are removing anachronistic discrimination that has no place in modern legislation. The Anti-Discrimination Commissioner's submission is one that I think clearly sums it up. In supporting this bill, the very intelligent and deeply committed Kevin Cocks said—

Providing the option for same-sex couples to have their relationship recognised, with or without a civil ceremony, is consistent with the right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of a person's sexuality. The Bill reflects leadership in supporting equality and nondiscrimination.

I am proud to stand up and support the restoration of this important right for loving, committed same-sex couples entering into a binding union.