




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 3 December 2015

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Human Rights Legislation

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.53 am): It is with great pleasure that I inform the House that today the Leader of the House will be moving a motion to refer to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee the consideration of the possible implementation of a human rights act in Queensland. I have consulted widely on this issue and there is a very broad cross-section of the community who are very interested in this area, and there are very diverse views. I know, Mr Speaker, you are one of the many Queenslanders who are very interested in this issue and referring the matter to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee will enable the public to have input, and allow analysis and consideration of possible models for Queensland.

It is a reminder of the continuing commitment this government has to the fundamental rights of Queenslanders to be shown respect and decency, to be treated fairly and honourably, not just by each other but by the government of the day. The protection of human rights is central to the Palaszczuk government's values, and it is an issue that many people in Queensland are passionate about and have advocated in favour of.

Labor has a long and proud tradition of supporting human rights: through decency and fairness in industrial relations; through our commitment to public education and health care; through our partnership with Indigenous Queenslanders; through ongoing progress for gender equality; through anti-discrimination legislation and support for multicultural affairs; and through supporting an independent, fair and accessible justice system. This next step will consider whether a human rights act is the best way to protect human rights into the future.

The Palaszczuk government is pleased to be examining the possibility of a human rights act for Queensland and promoting public discussion on this important issue. The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee will consider all aspects of the appropriateness of such an act for Queensland. Of prime consideration will be the effectiveness of Queensland's current laws and processes in protecting human rights. Possible improvements to existing laws and processes will also be carefully considered.

The committee will consider similar legislation in other jurisdictions as part of its review. It should be noted that the terms of reference are not designed to create an American style constitutional model. That would not be appropriate in our system of government. The committee is invited to consider how human rights regimes operate across a range of jurisdictions including Victoria, the ACT and New Zealand. This is the latest step in the continuing efforts of Labor governments to ensure the protection of human rights for all Queenslanders. I look forward to seeing the work of the committee.