



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

---

Record of Proceedings, 2 November 2016

**ADOPTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.43 pm): As the mother of an adopted daughter together with my husband, Michael—we deeply love her—I rise to speak in support of the Adoption and Other Legislation Bill. For too long Queensland's adoption laws have lagged behind those of other parts of Australia. Sadly, same-sex couples, single people and those undergoing fertility treatment are being unfairly discriminated against when it comes to adoption. This troubles me greatly, because it means that Queensland's existing laws are leaving many people facing unfair barriers when it comes to adoption. I believe that this is an unequal and unfair situation that needs to be changed, and I commend the minister for bringing this bill before the House.

We should be encouraging more Queenslanders to adopt children where they have a clear desire and a demonstrated ability to raise children in a loving family environment. That is exactly what I have done as the mother of a beautiful, wonderful and absolutely loved adopted daughter, and it is what many other Queenslanders want to do but they are being held back from doing this under our current laws and that must change. This bill offers a fair and workable way to address this injustice. I believe that most Queenslanders support this bill, particularly, I believe, the majority of my constituents in Brisbane Central.

The bill amends eligibility criteria to enable same-sex couples—I acknowledge members of the LGBTIQ community in the gallery this evening—single people and people undergoing fertility treatment to adopt a child. I could not think of a greater gift to give these people. I cannot think of a single reason to prevent this from happening. I have not heard a single convincing argument from those opposite as to why it should not happen.

I am not feeling very well at the moment. I am actually feeling quite poorly. When I woke up this morning I thought, 'I had better go to the doctor and get something to address not being well.' When I walked in I saw the family that is the main reason I want to vote in favour of this bill. Robert was there with Lily, who was not feeling very well. Robert and Andy, two constituents of mine, have raised Lily since she was a baby. She is now in high school and is a beautiful, well-adjusted, wonderful young woman. Robert and Andy, two professional men—Andy is a nurse at Lady Cilento hospital—have raised Lily since she was a baby. This morning when I saw Robert at the doctor with Lily I said to him, 'You won't believe this, but this evening we will be debating the adoption bill that will provide the opportunity for same-sex couples to adopt.' He was beaming. This is the reason these laws need to change.

This is about equality. This is about human rights. This is not about whether there are enough children to go around. This is not about whether we have demonstrated a need to put more people in the pool. This is not about there being not enough time to debate the bill. This is about basic human rights—equality out there for everybody—and not denying Robert and Andy the ability to legally adopt and have Lily as their child when they have cared for her for many years.

Adoption is not something to be swept under the carpet. Adoption is not something to be put in the cupboard. Adoption is a life journey. Anything we can do in legislation that makes it fair, that makes it transparent, that gives everyone the ability to obtain information—to not be punitive, to not make people feel like they are second-class citizens—is a step in the right direction. I support every single change in this bill.

Our family is currently going through the process of obtaining identifying information in relation to my daughter. We want to get as much of that information as we can. These laws will enable us to do that. My daughter deserves that right. We respect that right and we will be with her every single step of the way. This bill does all of that.

I commend the bill to the House. I see no reason we should not support it. I urge members opposite whose conscience may be niggling them a bit in relation to same-sex couples, single people and others to cross the floor, vote with us and see this bill passed because it is about equality, about human rights and about making sure that people who want to be able to adopt into a loving family are able to do that, regardless of their sexuality, the fact that they do not have a partner or the fact that they are undergoing fertility treatment. I commend the bill to the House.