



Speech By  
**Joan Pease**


**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2016

**LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to take Note**

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (11.57 am): Today I rise to speak to report No. 30 titled *Inquiry into a possible human rights act for Queensland*. I begin where I plan to end, with a comment made by Aimee McVeigh at one of our hearings. She stated—

The purpose of human rights is to make sure that everyone in our community has the opportunity to live a life characterised by freedom, respect, equality and dignity, so when we are thinking about the evidence that should be given the greatest weight my view is that we should be looking to the people who do not have lives characterised by freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

I thank Mr Mark Furner, the chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and member for Ferny Grove, and my parliamentary colleagues: Mr Michael Crandon, the deputy chair and member for Coomera; Mr Jon Krause, the member for Beaudesert; Miss Verity Barton, the member for Broadwater; Mr Don Brown, the member for Capalaba; Mrs Tarnya Smith, the member for Mount Ommaney; and Mrs Jann Stuckey, the member for Currumbin. I also acknowledge the member for Lockyer, Mr Ian Ruckus, who substituted on our trips.

**Miss Barton:** It's 'Rickuss'.

**Ms PEASE:** I am sorry; I thought I said 'Rickuss'. I acknowledge the great work of the secretariat staff who organised our public hearings and put together the fine documentation. I thank research director Steve Finimore, Bernice Watson and other members of the secretariat.

The Legislative Assembly directed the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to inquire into whether it is appropriate and desirable to legislate for a human rights act in Queensland other than through a constitutionally entrenched model. Other terms of reference included that the committee consider—

The effectiveness of current laws and mechanisms for protecting human rights in Queensland and possible improvements to these mechanisms;

The operation and effectiveness of human rights legislation in Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and by ordinary statute internationally;

The costs and benefits of adopting a HR Act (including financial, legal, social and otherwise); and

Previous and current reviews and inquiries (in Australia and internationally) on the issue of human rights legislation.

The committee undertook its inquiry over several months. We received over 500 submissions. The committee invited consultation with stakeholders in jurisdictions with statutory human rights legislation, including the ACT, Victoria and New Zealand. The committee also conducted public consultation with community and Indigenous groups in North Queensland. I would like to acknowledge

the people from Lockhart River, Thursday Island, Townsville, Cairns and New Mapoon who attended our hearings. Along with the trip away we also had select representatives and stakeholders appear in Brisbane.

During the inquiry we identified key issues which were raised by those who made submissions and considered features of human rights legislation in other jurisdictions. Unfortunately, the committee was unable to agree on whether it was appropriate and desirable to introduce human rights legislation. However, the government members of the committee made five recommendations.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Ms PEASE:** Certainly. Government committee members recommended, firstly, that the Queensland parliament move to legislate for a human rights act in Queensland. Secondly, we recommended that where a human rights act is legislated that all bills proposed by parliament be accompanied with a statement of compatibility. Thirdly, we recommended that where it is deemed by a parliamentary portfolio committee that a bill be inconsistent with a statement of compatibility this in itself does not limit the bill being passed by parliament. Fourthly, government committee members recommended that the judiciary have no part in any complaint process where a person is perceived to have suffered a human rights matter. Fifthly, government committee members recommended that the objectives of a human rights act, if it be legislated, contain as a minimum a right to recognition and equality, a right to life, a right to freedom of movement, a right to privacy and reputation, a right to religion and belief, a right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association, cultural rights, a right to enjoy culture, declare and practise religion and use their language—

*(Time expired)*