




Speech By
Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2016

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to take Note

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (12.20 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on report No. 30 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and inquiry into a possible human rights act for Queensland. From the outset, I acknowledge the work of the committee in preparing this report and in conducting the inquiry. It is a very important issue to a lot of people. I particularly acknowledge the work of the member for Sunnybank in his advocacy of this subject matter. I know that the member for Sunnybank holds this issue very dear to his heart, and I know his advocacy, along with the advocacy of many members on this side of the House, will continue in respect of this subject matter.

I also acknowledge all the community members who have been fighting for so long to have progress on this issue. I would like to particularly acknowledge—among other people; there are a lot of people to acknowledge—Aimee McVeigh for her strong advocacy in this space, Scott McDougall from the Caxton Legal Centre and James Farrell from CLC Queensland. They have been doing a lot of work working with other stakeholders as well as members of parliament to ensure that this subject matter not only is debated in this House but also is an important issue for all Queenslanders to debate.

In his contribution earlier the member for Sunnybank referred to Rob Hulls, a former Victorian attorney-general and former federal member. He was the federal member for Kennedy from 1990 to 1993. He is a great supporter of progressive reform not only in the Victorian parliament but also throughout Australia. I note that he is a bit of a hero for the Barcaldine members of the ALP. His corflute still hangs in their ALP meeting room in Barcaldine, which the member for Gregory will be aware of.

The reason I raise Rob Hulls is that he was the attorney-general of Victoria when it introduced its human rights act. He is probably one of the best authorities to say what impact a human rights act, or a human rights charter, has on people's lives. We heard some contributions from those opposite about how it does not have an impact on lives. What did Rob Hulls say that the Victorian human rights act has delivered? He said that it has meant better access for people to public transport. It has given older same-sex couples access to superannuation benefits.

Mr Crandon: That's nonsense. That's a federal issue. You are misleading the House: that's a federal issue.

Miss Barton interjected.

Mr RYAN: No, I am quoting Rob Hulls.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): Order! Member for Coomera!

Mr RYAN: I am quoting Rob Hulls. This is what he has said.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Coomera, you are warned under standing order 253A.

Mr RYAN: Rob Hulls also says it means that the right to a fair hearing has been better enforced.

Miss Barton interjected.

Mr RYAN: He says that it also saved single mothers, elderly people and people with disability from eviction. It has meant something as simple as a man living with disability in shared supported accommodation was finally allowed access to his own mail and a woman in residential care had her right to privacy when showering better protected. That is what Rob Hulls, the former Victorian AG, said human rights legislation in Victoria has delivered.

Jon Stanhope, who was the ACT chief minister when the Human Rights Act in the ACT was introduced, also said that it has had an impact in the ACT. He said that human rights legislation delivers these outcomes—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr RYAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, you have warned the member for Coomera and he continues to ignore your warning.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Thank you, member for Morayfield. You can continue.

Mr RYAN: Mr Stanhope said—

We had to show them that we were interested in human rights, a just society, freedom from discrimination, equality of opportunity—

Miss Barton interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Broadwater, that is about the fourth interjection you have made. You are also warned under standing order 253A.

Mr RYAN: Mr Stanhope said—

We had to show them that we were interested in human rights, a just society, freedom from discrimination, equality of opportunity, the rule of law and that we would show those who required support to be able to participate in the life of the community.

The reflection of Mr Stanhope is that a human rights act does two things: it improves how government operates and it provides people with recourse when their rights are violated.

This is an important subject matter for all members of this House to consider, but it is also an important issue for those people in our community who are most vulnerable, most disadvantaged and most marginalised. A human rights act will ensure that we provide a strong framework so that those people are best protected by their government.