




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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ADJOURNMENT

Marriage

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (11.01 pm): I too am fortunate to represent a fantastic electorate—that of Brisbane Central, soon to be named McConnell. Brisbane Central is made up of a number and variety of people who live in a fantastic inner-city suburb, many of whom are members of the LGBTIQ community. It pains me that that community will soon be forced to undertake a postal vote to give them marriage equality. It pains me because I am hoping that this path that the federal government wants to go down does not become a divisive and horrible one in Australia.

In my electorate there are not too many people whom I speak to who do not support marriage equality. I want to put on the record that I will be voting yes should we be forced into a postal vote. I suggest that we save the \$122 million, but if the federal government wants to spend it then let us give it to some of those LGBTIQ communities that do great work—for example, the services that Open Doors provide for young people struggling with their sexuality; the services that the Queensland AIDS Council provide; and the services that the LGBTI Legal Service provide for people from the LGBTIQ community.

The Palaszczuk government gets on with the job. We do not need a postal vote. We restored civil partnerships. We removed the defence of provocation known as the gay panic defence. We standardised the age of consent, removing any inequality. We issued an apology to people punished under historical gay sex laws, and we have a bill which will soon be debated to expunge historical homosexual gay convictions. We get on with the job. I plead with the federal government: get on with the job. Just do it. No government should be able to tell somebody who they can love or who they should be marrying. It should be done right now. It can be done at any time, yet we are being forced into this unnecessary, costly and possibly damaging postal vote—to do what? To do what all of us know: that someone who is a member of the LGBTIQ community should have the same rights as anybody else.

We do not ask if I should be able to marry my husband and neither should my daughter have to ask who she should marry if she finds somebody that she wants to spend the rest of her life with. She should be able to do that like anybody else in society. What I say is: vote 'yes'. I will be marching at the Brisbane Pride Festival Fair Day Rally on 23 September with my LGBTIQ community. We will be advocating the 'yes' vote for marriage equality. I urge everybody else, particularly in Brisbane Central, to do likewise.