




Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**  
**MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA**

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## **CRIMINAL LAW (HISTORICAL HOMOSEXUAL CONVICTIONS EXPUNGEMENT) BILL**

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (4.57 pm): 1990 was not that long ago. Bob Hawke was Prime Minister, George Bush Sr was President and after 11 years Margaret Thatcher was packing up 10 Downing Street. *Twin Peaks* had just premiered on ABC, Milli Vanilli's producer had shocked the world by disclosing that they had been lip-synching the whole time, and *Die Hard 2* had just come out. 1990 really was not that long ago. How incredible to think that just that short while ago you could go to jail just because of who you love.

Until 1990, consensual homosexual sex was illegal in Queensland. Gay men in Queensland were targeted, tricked and charged using laws that were born out of bigotry, hatred and fear of anything different. Some gay men lied and confessed to the worse charge of rape because admitting to having consensual sex meant that both partners could be charged. Even in 1990, when this House debated decriminalising homosexual sex, the debate was base and cruel, and some members chose to use their platform to say that LGBTIQ Queenslanders were somehow lesser than their heterosexual peers. Members can read *Hansard*. It was pretty sick.

We really have not come that far. MPs are still using their platform in the marriage equality debate to attack LGBTIQ people to say that they do not deserve equality, they do not deserve to marry the people they love and they do not deserve to raise children together, to say that they should not be considered next of kin or to be allowed to make decisions for their loved ones in their time of need. When those MPs stand up proudly and tell people that LGBTIQ people are not equal and are not normal, the homophobes hear them loud and clear. So far in what was promised to be a respectful debate we have seen 'yes' signs graffitied, equality campaigners spat on and sworn at, people's homes defaced and rocks thrown through people's windows. While some of the things that have been said have been pretty funny, like Kevin Andrews who said, 'I have affectionate relationships with my cycling mates. We go cycling on the weekend, but that's not marriage'—it might not be marriage, but it does not sound like cycling to me either—or when Fred Nile suggests that we could just sort the whole thing out by calling it 'homiage' and 'lesiage' instead of the term 'marriage', it is much less funny when Eric Abetz describes homosexuality as sodomy and incest or Tony Abbott says that same-sex marriage is a threat to Western civilisation. Malcolm Turnbull knew that this would never be a respectful debate. It was never supposed to be. It is supposed to be a distraction.

While some have chosen to use the marriage equality debate to stir up the bigots and the homophobes, I am proud to use my platform to support Queensland's LGBTIQ community and I am proud to be part of a government that has consistently fought for the rights of gay Queenslanders—when we reintroduced civil unions, when we allowed same-sex couples to adopt, when we stuck up for Safe Schools, when we equalised the age of consent and when our Premier stood in this House and apologised to the men who have had to live their lives with a criminal record for simply loving the person they loved. I commend the bill to the House.