




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

Record of Proceedings, 19 September 2018

**ANTI-DISCRIMINATION (RIGHT TO USE GENDER SPECIFIC LANGUAGE)
AMENDMENT BILL**

Introduction

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (12.29 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Anti-Discrimination (Right to Use Gender-Specific Language) Amendment Bill 2018 [[1375](#)].

Tabled paper: Anti-Discrimination (Right to Use Gender-Specific Language) Amendment Bill 2018, explanatory notes [[1376](#)].

This bill will hopefully mark a turning point in the battle for common sense. It is ridiculous to me as a proposition to think that we find ourselves having to legislate to protect the use of the terms 'boy' or 'girl', 'husband' or 'wife', 'man' or 'woman', but here we are. For too long we have seen the attack against traditional values increase with a very vocal and very vociferous extreme left minority infecting our accepted way of life, and I believe that ever since the debate over same-sex marriage there has been an implied blank cheque to attack many other cultural norms that exist.

The aggressive push away from classifications of gender based on an individual's natural sex is undermining many traditional values and at some point we must draw a line in the sand and protect the values of those who wish to uphold or maintain those values. This bill is not imposing on those people who choose to adopt that value set. It is not imposing on them at all. It is protecting the rights of people who choose to have an alternate value set, and I make that very clear at the outset.

I want to give the House a few recent examples of the invasive extreme views, because it will be said during the course of this debate that this is not needed and that there is no evidence of this and already there has been some commentary in the media that some universities have come out and said that this is not right. Following that, we received a number of communications from students saying, 'Here's the evidence. We are being discriminated against right now in the language that we use,' which has prompted, in some part, the necessity for us to bring some protections into this House.

I will go through a few of those examples where these views have started manifesting themselves. There has been a call for compulsory dedicated gender-neutral bathrooms to be part of the building code. That is not to say that you cannot have them, but that is not to say that everyone has to provide them either.

Other examples are Commonwealth Games volunteers told to use gender-neutral language to avoid causing offence; the Queensland government committing to build awareness and education around transgender identities in schools by providing information to principals about gender-neutral school uniforms, school camps, use of toilets and participation in sport; changes to the Queensland

driver's licence to remove a person's sex or gender; universities that mark down students for language that could be considered gender exclusive, even if that language is grammatically incorrect; the Qantas Words at Work policy suggesting a range of language that excludes that gender-specific language; an Australian Defence Force guide that encourages the use of certain language and the potential bullying impact of not using sensitive language; and They Day that is celebrated now in the Victorian Public Service.

The objectives of this bill are to protect an individual's right to use traditional gender based language if they so choose and also to protect businesses and other organisations from disadvantage and harassment if they only provide facilities and services that recognise gender as either male or female. The bill achieves these objectives by ensuring the existing anti-discrimination framework prohibits punishment or disadvantage against individuals who choose to use traditional gender based language in the workplace, academic environment or any other environment where behaviour is controlled by a third-party entity. The bill also creates provisions within the existing anti-discrimination framework that protects entities from prosecution and disadvantage in the provision of infrastructure, services or facilities based solely on traditional gender classifications.

The amendments define two types of discrimination: direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination happens if a person treats or proposes to treat a person who uses the language less favourably than another person. A topical example is university students having assignments marked down because they use traditional gender language. Indirect discrimination happens if a person indirectly or directly imposes or proposes to impose a term or standard, whether written or unwritten, that a person will not comply with if the person uses the language.

The aspect of the bill that I consider vitally important relates to businesses and institutions that are more and more abusing their influence over employees and students to limit the use of traditional language. Those people who choose to use that traditional form of language are currently being punished, and that will grow in time. These organisations will disguise their extreme agendas as language guides or anti-discrimination policies that are suggestions around the use of gender based language, and this creates a malaise over this issue yet it has not brought it to a head for a mature debate around it. That is why we are introducing this bill—that is, so there is a debate, it brings the issue to a head and people can have their say.

The reality is—and I think most people would accept this—that if a boss or a person marking your university assignment has preferred language and you do not use it, you are going to be overlooked for that promotion or you might have your assignment marked down. A lot of this can be very discreet and underhanded in the way that it impacts on our lives. These implied threats and coercion used by organisations against members and employees are a worrying trend indeed. This sort of malaise can only come from weak governments and politicians not doing anything about a proliferation of these ideologies and not being held to account and not bringing it to a head to have a debate so that we can discuss this and have people vote on it.

We believe that there are extreme views being pushed and that there is a blank cheque, and I invoke the word 'relativism', where everything traditional gets compromised and has to be thrown out the window. We will even meet halfway, which is what this bill attempts to say—that is, we accept that there is progressive language used out there and that other people have different views. We accept that, but what we are proposing is that if we choose not to accept that we will still have some rights to do that. I think that is a pretty good compromise to have on this issue.

In essence, this bill protects true diversity because it allows people to have what are called progressive views and other people to maintain traditional values. They both will still have their rights protected. I think it is very important to acknowledge that there are different people in society who have different views and there are big cultural shifts in different parts of the state where different views are predominant. Nothing in this bill is intended to prohibit the use of non-traditional gender language. I have tried to make that painfully clear in this introductory speech. There is nothing to prohibit the use of non-traditional gender language or the provision of facilities and services by any individual entity that does want to cater for non-traditional gender classifications. I stress that again.

This is about a right to stand up for some traditional values in the House. We believe this issue has been brought to a head. Many would comment that this bill is not needed and there are no issues—and that already came out, as I said, in the media where universities were patting this issue down saying, 'That's not an issue at all. There's no evidence of that.' Contrary to that view, students wrote to us saying, 'Here is the evidence where we have been marked down.' This is happening now. It has to be discussed and debated by this House to bring this issue to a head. The KAP is proud to do that.

First Reading

Mr KATTER (Traeger—KAP) (12.38 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.