




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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HUMAN RIGHTS BILL

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (5.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Human Rights Bill 2018. I am the daughter of a Quandamooka man who, until the year before I was born, was not even counted as a human being in this country. I am the granddaughter of a Quandamooka man and a Kanjuu woman who were never counted as human beings; they were counted as animals in this country. My grandfather, a Quandamooka man, never had the right to vote in his whole life. He died before he was able to vote. Right here and now, two generations later, his granddaughter is a member of this parliament.

The member for Mirani mentioned the 1948 period—the year that my father was born—as a heralding time for human rights across the world. Let me be very clear: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this country did not benefit from any of those conventions. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—my father, my grandmother, my grandfather and the thousands of generations before them—did not benefit from any of that. In fact, the laws that continued since that time were seen through a prism that saw Aboriginal people—first nations people—as less than human. That is why a bill of this nature is so incredibly important, so that from this point on every piece of legislation considers the human rights of all human beings in this country and in this state. It will not matter if you are somebody from the South Seas. It will not matter if you are a first nations person or a person who has just arrived as a refugee. It will not matter if your family has been here for four, five or six generations. You will be treated equally through the lens of a human rights bill. That is why this bill is so incredibly important.

Through this bill, we will never see the kind of legislation that we have seen in the past that affected my grandparents, my father and people in my generation. We have seen the legacy of past legislation that has not had a human rights lens. We have seen it through reports such as *Bringing them home*, when whole generations of Aboriginal people were stolen from their families. We see the outcomes of that kind of legislation when we look at the number of Aboriginal people who are incarcerated and particularly when we see the increasing number of Aboriginal women who are incarcerated. We are seeing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people overrepresented in all of the things that we do not want to see them overrepresented in. That is because we have had legislation that has not fully understood the human rights of all.

This bill will ensure that respect for human rights is embedded in the culture of the Queensland public sector. It will deliver on our election commitment and it will set a standard of achievement to which government and citizens should all aspire. All of the 23 human rights protected through this bill are important in advancing the rights of Queenslanders.

I make special mention of the fact that the bill explicitly recognises cultural rights and, in particular, the distinct right of first nations peoples to exercise our culture. We must remember that it was not that long ago—only a few generations ago—when Aboriginal people were told that they were not legally allowed to practise their own culture in this country. This legislation, the Human Rights Bill, will ensure that that can never happen again to Aboriginal people or to any other peoples in this state.

This bill will mean that future legislation will be passed through a lens of human rights, which has never been done before. It will also lay a foundation for the bigger conversation that needs to happen between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. In Queensland already we have been saying that we need to talk long term about the truth telling of what has happened in this state. We need to be able to use that truth telling to enter into a contract between our governments, our country and first nations peoples. That is why I have very clearly articulated that I am very much in support of the treaties going forward. The fundamental aspects of the Human Rights Bill give us the right to be able to have a conversation about truth telling and a treaties process for this state.

I acknowledge the Attorney-General for all of her hard work. I acknowledge all of the members of the committee who have worked so hard on this. I acknowledge my father, who is deceased, and my grandfather and grandmother who would never have imagined our state having such a focus on their human rights. On behalf of all of those generations and the people who will come after us, I support this bill and commend it to the House.