




Speech By  
**Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe**

**MEMBER FOR SANDGATE**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 February 2019

### **HUMAN RIGHTS BILL**

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (12.11 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Human Rights Bill 2018. I commend the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice for introducing this bill. I also acknowledge the work that has gone into bringing it before the parliament, including the work of the committee. In my role as Minister for Multicultural Affairs, there are several aspects of the bill that I want to make particular mention of. I will come to those in a moment.

Firstly, I make an overarching reflection on how this bill is one element that demonstrates the way in which we are modernising Queensland. The great project of modernising Queensland is one that I think Labor governments have taken the lead on over the past 30 years. This vitally important bill is a further step in the creation of a modern Queensland. The role that this place and governments play in modernising Queensland is very important. I recognise that this bill is a part of that tradition, which has been very firmly but not exclusively led by Labor governments.

In relation to my role as Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I want to mention particular aspects of the bill. Clause 27 of the bill protects cultural rights, so that all persons with particular cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds have a right to enjoy their culture, declare and practice their religion and use their language in community with other persons of that background. Clause 20 of the bill provides for the protection of freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, so that every person has the right to think and believe what they want and to have or adopt a religion free from external influence. Together, those clauses support and further strengthen the human and civil rights framework that has been developed and matured in Queensland since 1989, coming under the arch of modernising Queensland.

The bill complements the Multicultural Recognition Act 2016. The third clause of the Multicultural Queensland Charter states that—

The people of Queensland should be able to express and celebrate, in a lawful way, their cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

The fourth clause of the charter states—

Equal rights and responsibilities under the law and equitable access to the services provided or funded by the government for all people of Queensland helps build a fair community.

The Multicultural Queensland Charter formed the action plan for the Queensland government over the past three years. In my role as Minister for Multicultural Affairs, it is my responsibility to report back to parliament this year on the outcomes of all government departments in enacting the charter in all of their activities. I very firmly believe that passing this Human Rights Bill further demonstrates the values of the Labor government and our ongoing commitment to improving the human and civil rights framework here in Queensland.

I will reflect on some of the remarks made by members opposite in opposing the bill. Just before I stood, I heard a contribution in which there was a suggestion that the bill would take laws and decision-making out of the hands of this parliament. There could be nothing further from the truth. The

bill absolutely enshrines the role and the ability of this parliament, in the great tradition of Westminster parliaments, to make decisions that are in the best interests of all Queenslanders. Any clear-headed reading of the bill brings one to an understanding of that. I urge my fellow members of parliament to reject the fallacies that we have heard from those opposite and to support the fundamental dignity that this legislation will provide to each and every one of our fellow Queenslanders, no matter their background and no matter how they live their lives. The bill will provide a place for them to belong and to be Queenslanders alongside us.