




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 27 February 2019

HUMAN RIGHTS BILL

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.40 pm), in reply: I thank the members for their contribution. I know I say that after every bill. I do question making that statement today.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: If those opposite want to interrupt, then they are not going to give their shadow any time to talk to their amendments. They can decide whether they want to keep doing this or not.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms Simpson interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Order! Member for Maroochydore, you are warned under the standing orders. I had called order and you continued.

Mrs D'ATH: In replying to the debate that has gone on with this bill, there are a couple of themes that are worth touching on, but I have to say that I found the responses from those opposite quite appalling. I hoped that this would have been one of those rare occasions where the whole parliament could come together. This should have been one of those occasions where the whole parliament could come together. Sadly, that was not the case.

I want to very quickly touch on the reference to the lack of support. It might come as a surprise to those opposite, but if they had read the committee report they would have seen hundreds of submissions from individuals and groups giving evidence to the committee. They might want to look up in the gallery and face the people who are here listening and say that their views do not count.

I just want to name a few of the significant stakeholders that those on the opposite side seem to be so dismissive of: A Human Rights Act for Queensland, QCOSS, Caxton Legal Centre, Community Legal Centres Queensland, Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: You may not want to hear it but you should listen. I will continue: LGBTI Legal Service, Sisters Inside, Prisoners Legal Service, Human Rights Law Centre, Micah Projects, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, Tenants Queensland, Queensland Alliance for Mental Health—

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I am just going to keep going: Council on the Ageing Queensland, Community Services Industry Alliance, PeakCare, Queenslanders with Disability Network, Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Southern Downs, I can hear you constantly. It is very difficult to hear the minister.

Mrs D'ATH:—the National Disability Services, Endeavour Foundation and Queensland Advocacy Incorporated. Those on the other side may be dismissive of their views, but I can assure this House and those stakeholders out there that the Palaszczuk government cares about their views. We are listening and we are delivering for those good people of Queensland.

There has been a lot of fearmongering from those opposite. We have heard that this bill is going to do nothing but at the same time it is going to change everything. They cannot have it both ways. I have heard over and over again that it is undemocratic, that it undermines the Westminster system, that the courts are going to scrutinise every single piece of legislation, that we are going to see the courts allegedly overturning legislation—although, if they had read the bill, they would have seen that that cannot occur with the dialogue model. We heard that we are going to see the courts bogged down with causes of action, even though it can only be a piggyback action. Again, they would have had to have read the bill or the committee report or listened to any of the debate on this side to know that.

I want to say something about the rubbish that is being said about the judiciary and separation of powers, and those opposite should know about separation of powers, because they have overstepped the mark numerous times when it comes to separation of powers. Those opposite tried to claim to the people of Queensland that we are going to see declarations of incompatibility coming out of the courts on everything. However, since they introduced the charter in Victoria in 2006, there has been one declaration of incompatibility issue—one. There is no evidence to back up the claims of those opposite.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat, Minister. Again, members, it is very difficult to hear the minister.

Mrs D'ATH: When it comes to the number of matters before the courts, again, if those opposite had done their research they would know that on average over the past few years there have been about 20 matters per year before the Victorian courts. That is out of thousands of matters that come before the courts every year.

There is already evidence there in Victoria and the ACT. They cannot come in here and claim that this bill will do all these things when there is no evidence to back it up. I have to comment on the member for Clayfield's remarks that, basically, because a bill of rights—either entrenched or as a charter or a human rights bill, as we are seeking to introduce here in Queensland—in other countries has not fixed everything, it is just not worth doing. That is the view of those opposite. Listening to this debate, I feel like we have gone backwards by decades. It is appalling. I want to thank everyone on this side for their considered and sensible contributions to this debate, but I particularly want to acknowledge Minister Enoch's contribution. I say it was the best contribution.

In summing up, can I say that this is a good thing for Queensland. This is what the people of Queensland deserve. They have a right to be heard. Those on the other side can go back to their electorates and explain why they are voting against this today. We on this side are proud of what we are doing.