




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION BILL

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (12.52 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022. The bill repeals and replaces the existing BDMR Act to ensure registration services remain relevant, responsive and contemporary. There are four key objectives of the bill. I intend to focus on the first listed objective—to strengthen the legal recognition of trans and gender-diverse people.

Gender is such an important part of our identity as human beings. Gender identity goes beyond the way that someone outwardly presents themselves. It is the core sense of oneself. For many of us, our lives are made simpler if we identify with the gender listed on our birth certificate, consistent with our biological or sexual organs at birth, but there are many Queenslanders whose lives do not reflect this context. One of my constituents, like many Queenslanders, shared with me recently what the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022 means to him and to our community as a whole. He said—

The current state of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act implies that the gender of a person is solely defined by physical attributes. However, the meaning of a person's gender goes far beyond this.

A person's gender identity encompasses and defines who they are. Importantly, such an identity is valid with, or without, physical and bodily changes. In simple terms, you cannot see the gender of a person, the person can only feel and resonate with their identity themselves, irrespective of any physical change.

As such, being incorrectly recognised within legal documentation is both detrimental and discouraging to a person's gender identity. Accordingly, legislation must reflect and empower people to be the best version of themselves with the identity they resonate with most.

Being yourself is a vital part of individuality. Thus, denying the gender diverse community proper legal recognition is taking away their ability to live a life where they are entirely recognised as who they are.

I experienced firsthand the reaction of my community when a local school, Citipointe Christian college, attempted to demand that parents sign an enrolment contract that insisted children only identify with the gender that God bestowed upon each person in all aspects of their life—page 15. I table, for the information of the House, that enrolment contract.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Citipointe Christian College: Contract of Enrolment' [796](#).

The document included a statement of faith that not only describes homosexuality as a sin but puts it alongside bestiality, incest and paedophilia. It also includes a lengthy paragraph on why the school expects children to 'identify with the gender God bestowed on them'. The message here is clear: LGBTIQ+ students are seen by the school community as an abomination in the eyes of God.

Imagine how those transgender students at this school must feel dealing with the consequences of these statements from the school leadership. As the local member and a practising Christian, I worry deeply about these students, many of whom may not have come out to their parents and peers. We know the rates of self-harm among gay and transgender people are already too high, and I hate to think of the long-term consequences of this school's actions. Thankfully, after an enormous backlash from parents, teachers, former students and the wider Mansfield electorate community, the contract has now been withdrawn.

Throughout my career as a school administrator, I have experienced discomfort over many years in having to produce student report cards using the student's pronouns consistent with their school enrolment form. Information in this legal document was drawn from a student's birth certificate. There were many instances where a student's gender listed on their birth certificate did not align with their lived gender. This created much unease and confusion for these students and their families, not to mention the embarrassment for me as an administrator knowing without any doubt that these young people and their families had journeyed a difficult path to enable these young people to live their true life.

Unlike those opposite, having supported many young people and their families as they navigated a child's gender identity, I am absolutely confident that these families ensure that they have all of the knowledge, education, research and support that they need as they embark on one of the most difficult journeys a parent can go on. I am absolutely confident that these families are making the right decision. I am absolutely confident that these families ensure that they have every bit of information they need to best support their young person as they journey on this most difficult path in life.

In every instance I have been incredibly moved by the unconditional love, compassion, empathy and support shown by parents, families, teachers and peers. My fondest memories as a principal include shaking the hands of graduating students. During these moments all I was conscious of was a happy, proud and excited young person ready to take their place in this adult world and knowing that I had done everything I possibly could every day as a leader to ensure their success. I was never conscious of the colour of a student's eyes, the colour of their skin, their gender or their sexuality, for these aspects of a young person have nothing to do with the teaching and learning process and, quite frankly, are none of my business. I would suggest that it is none of the business of those opposite what a student or a young person or a person living in Queensland identify as the gender that they feel most comfortable with.

I strongly believe that gender exists on a continuum: at one end is female and at one end is male and we all—every single member of this House—lie somewhere on that continuum. Not all transgender people will want or be able to undergo sexual reassignment surgery given its costs, limited availability and potential health and other complications. The current surgery requirement to change one's gender unnecessarily medicalises the recognition of a person's lived identity. For many transgender people, the ability to update their identity records to reflect their sex affirms their identity and supports improved wellbeing. This is the least that we can do for all transgender Queenslanders.

Several weeks ago this House was dealing with the Path to Treaty. This week this House is dealing with a bill that supports our transgender community. The Palaszczuk government never backs away from debating and confronting these most important social agendas. I am proud to be a member of this Palaszczuk government. I am proud to continue to address the contemporary and changing nature of Queensland. We are a progressive state. I look forward to seeing this bill pass tomorrow afternoon. I commend this bill to the House.