




Speech By  
**Hon. Di Farmer**

**MEMBER FOR BULIMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 June 2023

**BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION BILL**

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (4.22 pm): I rise to speak on the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022. Madam Deputy Speaker Bush, I note your earlier comments that there would be many diverse views on this bill, and I congratulate you on the gracious way in which you have acknowledged that. Sitting in the chamber today I, along with I think every member on this side of the House, have found much of the argument and commentary upsetting and personally offensive. I accept that this is a debate and we listen to each other's opinions. However, I want to acknowledge that regardless of the offence that any of us might take—some more than others—there are people in the gallery today who are hearing these views, who are likely to have suffered more social exclusion, more discrimination, more harassment, more violence and who are likely to be more vulnerable as a result of who they are than most of us.

For the people who are sitting in the gallery today to hear these views, to have bravely come here today knowing that this was going to happen—that what you have been hearing and experiencing for most of your lives was going to 'happen on steroids' today, I say on behalf of all on this side of the House, that I am sorry that you had to hear this in this House—no matter how brave you are, and how much you knew that would happen. To hear arguments which imply that if you are a transwoman you are therefore a pervert, or someone who is more likely to perpetrate violence against other women—I am sorry, but I do not even know what to say about that.

I rang a friend of mine who is a transwoman. Her name is Jo and she worked for me a few years ago. I said to her, 'What would you like me to say for you?' I asked her how she was going and she said, 'I have had it on but I have had it on mute, because it is actually just too difficult to listen to; it is too confronting'. She said, 'I have had my passport changed over and had my driver's licence changed over and actually, that is pretty easy. You have to get a letter from someone to say that this person wants to be recognised as having a different identity to what they originally had on those documents.' For you and me to have our passport changed or to get a new licence, the worst thing that could happen is that we might have to line up at Queensland Transport—as lovely as those staff are—for an hour or two, or in a passport office. Jo had to go and seek a letter from the appropriate person to discuss her life journey; to discuss why she wanted that change and why it was important to her. To have to justify who she was to get a driver's licence and passport was the most traumatic experience she said she has ever had.

Jo said a birth certificate—possibly a document you use less—is imperative, as it currently stands, to seek surgery in order to justify changing your birth certificate. This means people who are incredibly vulnerable are much more likely to be unemployed and to suffer financial difficulties—that is what the research shows. People who live and work in Queensland have to travel to another state to do that to justify who they are. That is not the community that I want to live in; that is not the community that we as members of parliament should uphold. We should be a community where everybody is equal and everybody is respected. This issue is fundamentally about respect—you should be whoever you

want to be and nobody should question that, or make you do anything more than 'just be yourself'. I wish Jo was standing in my place to say this but she said, 'I want the same rights as everybody else; to engage in Queensland in the very systems that are designed to protect and enable us all. I want to have those same rights as anybody else.' That is why I support this bill, because every single person deserves that.