




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION BILL

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (2.00 pm): I have heard members of the government who support this legislation say it is important not to label people and they have then turned around and labelled opponents of this bill as extremists or fringe. That means the gay mum of a young girl who contacted me in opposition to this bill, according to Labor members opposite, is an extremist or a fringe element of the community and should not be listened to. Parents who are genuinely concerned for the rights of their young female children are worried that they will not have any support if they raise concerns about biological men having access to women's toilets. That means others who have raised a range of genuine issues about this legislation will have Labor government members saying, 'Don't listen to them. They're fringe and they're extremist.'

I put to this House that, if we are truly going to be tolerant and genuinely listen to the different voices, those sorts of labels are going to shut down the very people who not only need to be heard but also need in many circumstances our support and protection. People's lived experience—where they may have faced domestic violence or security issues around their personal space—should not be ignored because Labor government members have said that they are extremist or fringe.

I have heard the government and the Attorney-General say that they do not believe there is evidence to back up people's fears about having biological men accessing women's safe spaces. They are simply not listening. They are not listening to the many women who have lived experiences and have faced genuine issues around perpetrators who have taken away their ability to feel safe. These women have a genuine need—as do many women in our community—to women-only safe spaces. The government are not listening because they are hypocrites. They preach tolerance and then they practise intolerance.

Having compassion and understanding for transgender people and gender dysphoric children is important, but achieving that should not come at the expense of women's rights—and that is where this bill fails. Women have had to fight for their rights over the generations for women-only spaces and services for good reason. Today this state Labor government undermines the rights of women by providing for gender self-identity in this bill—where a biological man can self-identify as a woman. This has cascading impacts when read in combination with anti-discrimination laws. This state Labor government is ignoring the voices of women from diverse political and social backgrounds who have expressed genuine concerns that this bill undermines the fundamental rights of women, particularly the right for women to have women-only spaces and services.

I have received correspondence from people from across a spectrum of backgrounds and from a variety of ideological backgrounds. It has come from people who you might say may not always have common ideology but who share a common concern with this legislation. As I have mentioned, I have been contacted by gay constituents who want this bill opposed and they have expressed their concerns. I have been contacted by straight people who have also expressed their concerns. As I said, these

people come from across a spectrum of backgrounds and very different backgrounds. Why don't their voices count when we listen to Labor members who want to label them and say they should not be heard?

Women have a right to be safe and they also have a right to feel safe—and that is what has been fundamentally missing from a lot of the defence the government has put up for bringing this forward. Not only do you have the right to be safe, you also have the right to feel safe. People who have lived experiences where they have not been safe are now being told they have to put up with a biological man accessing women-only safe spaces or else they will be labelled as being intolerant. That just does not cut it; it does not make them feel safe. Members on the other side say that they should feel safe because they can quote this or that study, but there are other studies that dispute the government's claims. However, there is no disputing a woman's right to feel safe and that is why I particularly speak strongly on behalf of those diverse constituents who have put forward their concerns to me.

Having a biological man who has self-identified as a woman or who claims they identify as a woman accessing women's safe spaces, such as women's toilets or women-only jails or DV shelters, is a risk to women's safety and a risk, as I have said, to their right to feel safe when they are in a women-only space. If you have ever talked to women who have faced abuse or violence, you would know that their right to feel safe matters as much as being safe. This has been totally ignored and belittled by some of the government's dismissals of women's concerns.

Why doesn't the government get this? Dismissing women's concerns about their safety is like blaming women; it is putting it on them and saying, 'It's your fault if you have concerns about your safety.' It is somehow the women's fault and the government is downplaying their very real concerns. I have heard nothing from the Attorney-General that in any way provides the safeguards or the satisfaction to those very real concerns. Having biological men in women-only spaces is not okay and this bill will make it harder for women to have those rights respected going forward after what I have heard from Labor members opposite. There is also the issue around girls sport and a range of other matters. As I have said, we need to have compassion and understanding for children, particularly gender dysphoric children, and how they are best supported, but this bill is not the way to achieve that.

I want to quote from some letters I received from constituents. It does concern me that their views somehow are not on the agenda of this government. This particular constituent said—

For every law-abiding transsexual/transgender person, there are probably many more non-transgender predators who would love this legislation, in order to get access to women's spaces. You may think that this is unlikely, but just consider the obsessive forces driving paedophiles and many sex offenders and voyeurs, and maybe you can comprehend that they are quite prepared to do a bit of pretence, to get what they want. Most of these people would never make any use of the legislation to actually change their birth certificate, but once you make it known that changing gender involves really nothing more than self-declaration, it changes the culture. It makes it seem acceptable for men to use the women's change rooms for example, merely by saying they feel womanly. Predators will be quite prepared to pretend to be women, in order to seek out their prey—be they women or children. This is already being seen in regions that are further along this track.

The letter goes on—

The current gender ideology dogma has become that for a man to "be" a woman, they do not necessarily need hormones or surgery or anything. They don't actually even need to make any attempt to look like a woman. Just a self-declaration of "womanliness" is enough to truly "be a woman" and to allow free access to spaces that are currently reserved for women and girls. Can you appreciate the safe-guarding problems here?

To also quote from another constituent, a gay mum of a young girl said—

Sex self-ID would be disastrous for women and girls—we essentially lose all female-only spaces—as self-ID means any male could self-declare a special 'identity' and, without having undergone any surgery or hormone treatment, gain access to all spaces designed for females only.

Another letter goes on to quote—

The argument that 'this won't happen' cannot be made. The things I have cited above have happened around the world, and many of these events are not rare. Another major objection ...

It goes on to state—

People making rational objections to this legislation will predictably be smeared as being 'transphobic' and 'bigoted'. It is not transphobic or bigoted to be concerned—

(Time expired)