




Speech By  
**Jason Hunt**

**MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA**

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**BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION BILL**

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (3.08 pm): I rise to contribute to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022. Recently in this country we saw bona fide and ardent Nazis protecting their turf in Melbourne, coincidentally, at the same rally as anti-trans activist Kellie-Jay Keen-Minshull was speaking. That is a tragic marriage of conflicting ideas by every measure.

These types of speakers and some of our submitters were terribly keen that their voices be heard—and fair enough—and heard they were despite certain smokescreen objections around consultation time frames et cetera. Sadly, these same people were not as keen to listen. I find that disturbing, particularly from submitters who would normally be striving for equity on any other day.

My contribution today is different to my normal contributions in that very few of the words will be my own; instead, I asked three trans people whom I am blessed to call friends to give me their words so that I might relay them in this House. I will start with an exchange I had just last weekend with the organiser of the Sunshine Coast Mardi Gras. Mr Neil Car uttered a single sentence that will stay with me forever, more so because it has clearly been lost in the disingenuous ideological haze thrown up by the LNP. Neil said simply, 'Jason, this bill will save lives.' Those opposing this bill should reflect upon that. From Jamie, a man I worked with for a number of years, we have this—

When I started my transition I was lucky enough to have already had a reproductive surgery to qualify me for changing my gender on my birth certificate. Unfortunately what held me back from being able to get it done was the required 12 months on hormones and living this life to be able to go ahead with it. This was horrendous when presenting for job interviews. Here I was a trans man who presented as male and was passing, having to out myself when they saw my birth certificate. It was so embarrassing and demoralising and it can be so dangerous as you don't know who you are outing yourself to. You don't know who is going to react negatively to this. This is information that you shouldn't have to provide, you shouldn't have to 'out' yourself at a job interview. As I provided earlier I was lucky enough to have had the surgery but there are so many that are not so lucky.

There are studies done on the trans community that show a higher rate of unemployment even though a high percentage have a tertiary qualification, rather than out themselves in an interview trans people don't want to put themselves into a situation where they will experience the discrimination or even the danger.

Having to sit across from interviewers and see the looks on their faces when they learn about you is demoralising and embarrassing. This has happened to me many times. During my most recent interview, at the start of the interview it was going really well but as I sat in front of a male supervisor and a female executive from Manpower, the demeanour of the male supervisor changed as soon as the information came to light. It was humiliating. So this merry-go-round of unemployment and mental health issues keeps going. Many cannot afford surgery but don't want to apply for jobs, so they can't save the money for surgery and the cycle continues.

This is a huge problem for self-esteem which contributes to the suicide rate in the trans community. I wanted to be a productive member of society but I felt like I was being held back by my birth certificate, by discrimination, and by my own self esteem. Not wanting yet another moment etched into my memory of yet another look of horror from the person sitting across from me which is an irrelevant piece of information and not connected to whether you are capable of doing the job or not.

It's time for a policy to change birth certificates needs to come into line with the ability to change Medicare, drivers licence, and passports. Please help eliminate discrimination towards trans people.

Jamie, this government has heard you. From Lea, the youth parliament member for Caloundra, I have these words—

The 17th of March, 2021 is a day that I will remember for the rest of my life. I sat there, in the early hours of the morning in the SCUH (Sunshine Coast University Hospital) inpatient psychiatric ward. My journey to this point had been fraught with challenges of depression and anxiety, but also with a feeling that I myself just couldn't comprehend. It was during this hospital admission where someone had first brought up the term 'transgender'. 'Someone whose gender identity or gender expression does not correspond with their assigned sex at birth'. This simple sentence, immediately clicked with me, and it was at that point, that I realised for me to survive, I needed to change, that I needed to accept myself for who I am and who I was meant to be.

My name is Lea. I'm an 18-year-old transgender woman from the Sunshine Coast, a proud former Caloundra State High School student and also school captain. The Births, Deaths and Marriages Reform Act would significantly impact on my life. Under the current laws, an individual must have undergone gender affirmation surgery in order to change their legal gender. For so many transgender people surgery is something that we either cannot afford, or simply do not want. Some say that being trans is a choice. But it is not. It is who I am.

I've been living as my true, authentic self for over a year now and I have been so humbled by the incredible support of my loving parents, my sister Olivia, my best friends Georgia, Eva, Lily and Ella, my school and the wider community.

For the government to recognize me for who I am, and not for who I used to be, would make me feel safe, recognized and celebrated. To those who oppose this bill, I say this: I am a woman. I already use the female bathrooms and wear my favourite dresses and skirts. This bill will change none of that, but the transgender and the LGBTQ community as a whole, are deserving of love, kindness and respect and most importantly recognition. We are simply human beings. Human beings who deserve the dignity of being recognized as their true selves.

Lea, this government has heard you. From d'Arcy, the former youth member for Caloundra, we hear this—and d'Arcy joins us in the gallery today—

When it comes to being trans my identity is often referred to as an 'illness' and I as a person is referred to as 'sick', the corresponding supposed evidence for this argument is 'science'.

I believe the best way for others to understand exactly how important the Births, Deaths, and Marriages Act and how crucial it is to the livelihoods of trans people is to use that same analogy.

That is to say that if being humane is not enough, perhaps playing into a cruel figure of speech is the way for others to understand.

The scenario is that: 18% of Queenslanders including myself (as per the 2018 census) are supposedly infected with an illness known as gender diversity with deadly side effects including but not limited to public discrimination, gender dysphoria, increased rates of domestic violence experiences, homelessness, suicide, and severe imposter syndrome.

Imposter Syndrome is the internal doubt a trans person must face in their pursuit of personal liberation, understanding who they are, accepting themselves, and not only living but thriving. This bill is in no way a cure, to refer to the illness analogy but it could be more accurately defined as a vaccine or a paracetamol.

The passing of the Births, Deaths, and Marriages Bill means all transgender people, regardless of age have the opportunity to be exactly who they are, who they want to be, and exactly what Queensland needs them to be ... alive.

This will stop every trans person from having to feel like two different people, as though they are an imposter in their own life. They can just be who they are.

Passing this bill means that if I had a time machine, I could tell four-year-old me to stop crying every night because It will be ok.

Gender diversity is not an illness, it's a difference. Difference is beautiful, let us be beautiful. Pass this bill in its entirety and save the lives of any, pass this bill and society becomes beautiful and our future becomes bright.

d'Arcy, this government has heard you. To Jamie, d'Arcy and Lea I say this: I have given you a voice—and through this you have given voice to thousands of trans people in Queensland—and it is for them that I commend this bill to the House.