




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION BILL

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeester—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (3.39 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022. I want to begin by acknowledging all those in the gallery today who have been supporting this work for many years. Each of us is having a human experience that, if fully realised, would support the living of a whole, healthy and authentic life full of love, respect and value. The idea that there are many who feel they have to hide who they are from the world, that their very existence, health and humanity is not supported—or worse, is seen as a threat or something that is less than; less deserving, less valued—to me is absolutely unacceptable. That is why this bill is so important. This bill will create monumental change for trans and gender-diverse Queenslanders. Simply put, as we have heard before this reform will save lives.

By modernising Queensland's birth registration to better recognise our diverse community we will also ensure that a person's legal identity matches their lived identity. This bill will ensure that registration services remain relevant, responsive and contemporary. It will strengthen the legal recognition of trans and gender-diverse people and better recognise contemporary family and parenting structures. It will also facilitate improvements in the operation of the registry, support fraud prevention and clarify the information collection, use and sharing powers of the registrar. The bill will also allow the registration of multiple combinations of parental descriptors to better reflect Queensland's diverse family structures. These descriptors include any combination of mother, father and parent. This reform will make a difference for Queensland families and ensure that birth registrations better reflect the diversity of families across the state.

The most extensive change proposed by the bill is a new framework for acknowledgement of sex. Under the current act a person is only able to change their sex on their birth registration if they have undergone gender-affirming surgery. This important registration change is currently not available to trans and gender-diverse people who are unable or chose not to undertake surgery. The bill removes the requirement to undergo gender-affirming surgery in order to update their sex on their birth registration, and I think that is right.

In recent months and years the LGBTIQ+ community, in particular trans and gender-diverse people, have faced increased discrimination and attacks. In countries across the world, including our own, far right extremists are leading anti-trans rallies and fuelling transphobic hate. That is why our government's commitment to equality for LGBTIQ+ Queenslanders is so important. We cannot let these divisive far right voices detract from the importance of advancing equality and strengthening legal protections in this state. I remind all members making contributions to the debate on this bill that it does not take much for the words of elected leaders to be weaponised to inflict significant hurt to the Queenslanders this bill seeks to benefit, and I think that is something that everybody in this House needs to remind themselves of. Your words as elected leaders can be weaponised to inflict all kinds of pain and hurt on the people this bill aims to benefit.

Protecting trans and gender-diverse Queenslanders from harm includes changing the law to ensure that lived identities can match legal identities. The committee heard from trans and gender-diverse Queenslanders who spoke about what this change means to them. We have heard many of those stories in the contributions of members from this side in particular. There are thousands of stories across our state. We have heard members of the Legislative Assembly speak about trans and gender-diverse people in their electorates and what this change means to them. This reform is another step towards true equality for LGBTIQ+ Queenslanders. We know there is more to do and our government will continue to fight for LGBTIQ+ Queenslanders, celebrating our diverse communities and ensuring they can live freely.

I want to thank every person and organisation who contributed their lived experience to the committee hearing process. Their valuable and honest contributions made a real impact and ensured the committee considered the lived experience of LGBTIQ+ Queenslanders. I want to thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for their important work and detailed consideration of the bill. I also want to thank the attorneys-general, both present and past, for their leadership in this space. In conclusion, to all transgender diverse and LGBTIQ+ Queenslanders I say this: you are seen; you are heard; you are valued; you are loved. Now with this bill your lived identity can match your legal identity. I commend the bill to the House.