




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

Record of Proceedings, 14 June 2023

BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (2.45 pm): I start by stating that I do not agree with and nor will I be supporting this bill. We are faced with some significant issues in Queensland right now. We have families with their backs to the wall financially; people on the streets because of a lack of affordable housing; the cost of living; electricity prices skyrocketing; a health system in crisis, particularly in regional Queensland; and youth crime that is out of control and costing lives. Yet here we are debating whether or not to allow gender identity to be changed on one's birth certificate to apparently redefine 'sex' as either male or female. This bill is poorly conceived, misleading and confusing. As pointed out in many of the submissions against this bill, the European Institute for Gender Equality provides very extensive definitions of 'sex' and 'gender'. 'Sex' refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define humans as male or female. It states—

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men.

My point is that, biologically, we are born male or female. In very minute circumstances, there are hermaphrodites. We cannot escape this fact. No matter what legislation, argument, opinion, political persuasion, research or study are presented, we are born male or female. That is it. I do not agree with any changes to the registry—none whatsoever. However, if the government was serious about pursuing this ideology, it would have made more sense and been simpler to keep 'sex' as male or female and just include an additional line for gender identity on the birth certificate, so your sex remains male or female but your gender identity is whatever you want. The average Queenslanders could not care less what a person identifies as in this new day and age. However, to change a legal document to satisfy one section of society is ridiculous and could lead to serious legal ramifications and social issues. One of these I wish to highlight is outlined in the Australian Christian Lobby's submission, which states that this bill—

... provides a legal pathway for male access to female-only spaces ... and is viewed by many in the community as controversial and dangerous.

As also pointed out, Queenslanders have every right to question the granting of access for biological males to female-only spaces. This is neither transphobic nor irrational, and anyone who uses those words to shut down or criticise debate today is out of order. The submission goes on to state—

Men's sexual violence against adult women ... is a pressing reason to reject the entry of males to sex segregated women's facilities. The problem of creating a 'right' for men to enter women's toilets is that some men have a clear interest in the sexual excitements that they can access by violating women's right to ... dignity in such places.

As highlighted in a speech to the Queensland parliament in December last year, the former attorney-general said—

We also know that some groups will try to cloak their transphobia in the guise of women's safety—making claims about trans women accessing women's spaces, including change rooms or even domestic violence shelters.

To counter this, and as stated by the ACL, I also believe this comment was inappropriate and designed to gag concerned feminist groups from expressing genuine concern on this sensitive issue. In fact, a submission from a clinical psychologist with 50 years of clinical practice states very clearly—

My experience with sex offenders taught me that they are very good at what they do, they are drawn to places where they can access their victims, they will use any ruse to target their victims and they never feel guilt or empathy.

The submission further states—

This proposed bill, in my view, is a gift to sex offenders of any level of seriousness.

A man who identifies as a woman is legally allowed to access any female spaces: refuges, lesbian groups, change rooms, sports and so on, and a woman's right to complain is denied. We have also seen in recent years a concerted push to allow males who identify as transgender to compete in women's sports and competitions. This is after decades of women fighting for their rights and recognition as equals in the sporting world. Now the government wants to open the door and tear that down to allow biological males to legally compete against women. Even women who argue against this are labelled and branded transphobic. Fortunately we have seen some sanity prevail with the World Athletics body banning transgender athletes from competing against women and we have seen Basketball Australia follow suit. I have no issue with transgender athletes competing in sport, but they can fight, just as women did, for their own specific competitions.

The concerns outlined in my speech and in many of the submissions to the bill are legitimate ones and should not be tossed aside or demeaned through name-calling in this debate. Again I repeat that I believe that this is a poorly conceived bill that will only cause further long-term damage to the wider community and which I will not be supporting.