




Speech By  
**Tim Mander**

**MEMBER FOR EVERTON**

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### **BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION BILL**

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (11.26 am): I rise to make my contribution to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022. A couple of weeks ago in a press conference, the now Minister for Health and then attorney-general was asked what the definition of a woman is. She answered by saying her definition of a woman is someone who identifies as a woman. That response—that comment, that statement, that point of view—is at the heart of this bill and it is also at the heart of my opposition to aspects of the bill. While that is the opinion of the now health minister and of the Labor Party, I think most Queenslanders find that definition absurd. Most Queenslanders—

**Government members** interjected.

**A government member:** They find you absurd.

**Mr MANDER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I hope that we can have a conversation in a respectful way on a very sensitive issue.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Order, members!

**Mr MANDER:** Isn't it funny that anything they disagree with is not disrespectful when they constantly interject and make the comments they make. Let me say that again: most Queenslanders find absurd the definition of a woman given by the health minister. Most Queenslanders believe that everybody should be treated with respect and with value. Most Queenslanders believe that nobody should be discriminated against and I agree with that as well. Most Queenslanders agree that trans people and those who suffer from gender dysphoria have had complex challenges in their lives and that that needs to be respected. Most Queenslanders believe that somebody has the right to change their birth certificate if they go through some medical procedure to change their gender. Most reasonable people think that and that is the current law.

However, this bill imposes the left's philosophical quest to change the very fabric of our social norms, which have served us well for centuries. There are two major issues—

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Members, I am determined to get through this debate in a respectful manner. I will warn all members against interjecting unnecessarily. The member for Everton has the call and I would encourage members to give him time to finish his speech.

**Mr MANDER:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The two major issues of concern in this bill relate to safe places for females and the issue that I want to pay particular attention to, which is the right that it gives children below the age of 16 years to change their gender. When you go through the committee report, it seems to be one of those issues that a number of people disagree with and they come from a surprising range of backgrounds, from both what is often described as the left of politics and the right of politics. Some of those groups that have issues that are relevant to what I want to highlight are Binary Australia, the Australian Christian Lobby, the LGB Alliance Australia, FamilyVoice

Australia, the Feminist Legal Clinic, Fair Go for Queensland Women, the Coalition of Activist Lesbians, Active Watchful Waiting, Gender Awareness Australia and the Women's Forum of Australia. All of those groups from different political backgrounds and philosophies unite in having grave concerns about some of the issues in this bill.

I now want to focus on some of those issues, particularly as they relate to children. Some have suggested that introducing these changes may lead to the earlier 'medicalisation' of children, which many would describe as being healthy. I read from the committee report because it summarises it very well. The LGB Alliance Australia—

... expressed concerns that young people once they have transitioned socially will move onto the second stage of medical transitioning.

There is also a view that—

... the Bill may have the effect of 'fast-tracking the medicalisation of gender dysphoric children', with interventions that 'risk irreversible damage including to a young person's future sexual functioning'.

Even those who do not believe that still think that allowing children under 16 to make significant decisions about their future will have significant social and cultural impacts that cannot be minimised. We on this side of the House want to ensure that all children are given the support to thrive in an age-appropriate framework. In our opinion, this approach allowing children aged 12 to 15 to apply for the change without their parents' permission goes too far. Given we are still learning about how best to support children experiencing gender dysphoria, it is pre-emptive to introduce some of the provisions of this bill.

Again, I turn to some of the comments of different groups outlined in the committee report. It states—

Some submitters raised concerns about the Bill's potential impact on children who are neurodiverse, experiencing mental illness, or have a history of trauma or family dysfunction. Professor Parkinson stated the Bill would 'damage' young people as 'legal registration as a sex other than their natal sex may concretise what would otherwise be a transient and relatively harmless identification beneath the broad transgender umbrella.'

WAAC and Women's Forum Australia stated that gender dysphoria in children can mask trauma and autism, as well as comorbid mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, that require other treatment options. Women's Forum Australia stated that the Bill 'erodes safeguards for children' in this regard. One submitter stated that the Bill could be considered 'reckless and negligent' as it would 'allow people to legally change their sex without a medical or psychological assessment, or even any medical documentation', thereby 'enabling a psychological condition'.

The report further states—

It was the submitter's view that this puts children at risk and 'removes the ability of the parents to ensure their children are protected, especially if their child suffers from a history of childhood trauma, family dysfunction, sexual abuse, gender dysphoria and/or other mental health issues'.

Further—

Fair Go for Queensland Women expressed a similar view, stating that young people 'do not possess the assured cognitive capacity to fully understand the full repercussions that this Bill may entail'.

I find it intriguing that in so many different ways we do not treat anybody under 16 as an adult, and rightly so. Anybody under 16 cannot vote, drive or go to a pub for a drink because society has said that they have not developed appropriately at that age, yet this bill gives them the right to make the most significant decision they would ever have to make at a time when many of them are suffering gender dysphoria which the experts have stated—not me—is a very dangerous practice. At a time when this state is suffering a health crisis, a youth crime crisis and a housing crisis, I believe that the majority of Queenslanders want us focused on those life issues rather than something outlined in these provisions that is potentially dangerous.