FAMILY COURT AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second Reading

Resumed from 9 August.

HON NICK GOIRAN (South Metropolitan) [2.09 pm]: I rise on the behalf of the opposition as the lead speaker, the shadow Attorney General to speak on the Family Court Amendment Bill 2022. The bill that is before us will amend the Family Court Act 1997 in two ways—firstly, to allow superannuation to be split amongst separating de facto couples in our state, and, secondly, for bankruptcy proceedings to be held concurrently with family law proceedings in Western Australia. At the outset, I indicate that the opposition supports the bill before the house.

Feedback that has been received from stakeholders indicates that there is widespread support for this bill. Members would understand why that is the case if they have had the opportunity to consider some of the case studies and the typical cases that family law practitioners have been dealing with. For the benefit of our debate today, I have been provided with two de-identified cases that demonstrate why the bill before us is not merely desirable but, indeed, necessary. The first de-identified case, which uses pseudonyms, is referred to as Sally's case. Sally is a woman in her 30s with two children, aged seven years and four years. Sally and Steve were in a de facto relationship for 12 years and separated a year ago. During their relationship, Sally and Steve agreed that Sally would take time off work to focus on raising their children. Since separating, Sally has obtained part-time work that fits in with her childcare arrangements. Her income is low and she receives Centrelink benefits to help with her family support. Steve's income is $130 000 per year. During their relationship, Sally and Steve purchased the family home, financed with the assistance of a mortgage. Since purchasing their home, there has been a considerable downturn in property values and the property is now worth approximately $25 000 less than the mortgage. They have no other assets except for a motor vehicle owned by Steve. Since separating, Steve has borrowed $50 000 from his parents to pay out the loan on his motor vehicle and other debts, and to generally help him get by. Steve has $200 000 in accumulated superannuation; Sally has $30 000. Sally says that Steve's drinking and drug use, plus his irresponsible spending habits, are the reason he has so little to show for his high income.

When the couple initially separated, they agreed that Steve would refinance the home in his sole name. Although Sally would end of up with nothing in the way of assets, at least she would not be left with responsibility for any debts. However, due to the downturn in the property market, the bank refused to refinance in Steve's sole name. Steve has proposed that Sally give him five years to refinance the mortgage, and failing that, the property will be sold, with him then retaining the benefit of any equity or responsibility for any shortfall. Sally is not in a financial position to reverse the proposal and retain the benefit of the house property. As they were a de facto couple, Sally is not able to receive the benefit of any of Steve's superannuation. Sally's superannuation balance is low due to her lack of work since their children were born. There are no other assets that can be transferred to Sally. She will be leaving a 12-year relationship with nothing to show for it. In contrast, Steve has amassed a considerable superannuation balance plus the benefit of a real estate property, which although in negative equity now will likely increase in value over time. As a de facto couple, Sally has only one more year to finalise her property settlement with Steve, so she cannot wait for the real estate property to increase in value to try to extract some equity from it. That is the first of the two case studies that I wish to bring to the attention of the house. I thank the expert stakeholder who provided it to me as a de-identified real-life case that demonstrates why the reform that is currently before us is desirable and necessary.

The second case that I bring to members' attention with the permission of the stakeholder is referred to as Cheryl's case. I again indicate that I am using pseudonyms for the purposes of this case study. Cheryl is a woman in her 40s who was in a de facto relationship with Keith, also in his 40s, for over 25 years. They have one adult child and a teenager with special needs who lives with Cheryl. They have been separated for four years. Keith married another woman within months of their separation and it is possible that he diverted funds and assets into the name of his wife prior to separating from Cheryl; however, Cheryl has not been able to verify this. Keith has always worked in well-paid fly-in fly-out jobs; Cheryl has always worked, but in less well-paid positions and mostly part-time since the births of their children. She continues to work only part-time due to her caring responsibilities for their teenager. During their relationship, Cheryl and Keith purchased a block of land, financed with the assistance of a mortgage. They have no other assets of value. Keith has over $200 000 in accumulated superannuation; Cheryl has $30 000.

After separating, Keith did not pay the mortgage on the block of land despite his high income, and it was recently repossessed by the bank and sold. It appears there will be a shortfall, after payment of the loan, of approximately $50 000. As the mortgage was in their joint names, Cheryl is liable to the bank for this debt unless the Family Court makes an order shifting responsibility to Keith. As they were a de facto couple, Cheryl is not able to receive the benefit of any of Keith's superannuation. Cheryl's superannuation balance is low due to her low income-earning capacity since their children were born. There are no other assets that can be transferred to Cheryl. She will be leaving a 25-year relationship with nothing to show for it except debts. In contrast, Keith has amassed a considerable superannuation balance, plus he allowed the only asset of the relationship to lapse into negative equity due to his

focus on financing his current relationship in preference to servicing the debts of his former relationship. That ends the second case study. I again thank the stakeholder for providing that to me.

I liaised with the stakeholder earlier this week, first of all to again verify that the information that had been provided to me in the case studies was de-identified, and secondly to ensure that their clients were happy for it to be provided to members in this forum. I am pleased to say that they were happy for that to occur. I will read an extract from the communication provided to me earlier this week, which states —

> Both clients were more than happy at the time that we prepared the case studies for their stories to contribute towards rectifying the injustice they experienced.

The stakeholder goes on to say —

> I'm sure neither of them expected it to take this long though.

I guess that is the appropriate segue to indicate that, without a shadow of a doubt, this bill has widespread support. The only criticism is the amount of time it has taken for this important change to be implemented in our state. This is the type of reform that warrants, and will receive, bipartisan support. In situations like this, it is in my view preferable that the politics be taken out of this type of reform. However, I note that the Attorney General took the liberty to make political points in the other place with his purported version of the history of this matter. With all due respect to the Attorney General, who may have been confused at the time he delivered that confusing narrative to the other place, I will take a few moments to correct the record on behalf of the opposition. As I say, the only criticism this bill attracts from stakeholders is the time it has taken to be implemented.

For the record, in 2001, the Howard government—I note, a coalition government—amended the Family Law Act 1975 so that married couples could split superannuation interests. Seven years later in 2008, this was extended to de facto couples, relying on referrals by states to the commonwealth pursuant to our federal Constitution. De facto couples in other states have, as a consequence, been able to split their superannuation for more than a decade. Of course, the ability for de facto couples in our state to do so is, as I mentioned earlier, long overdue.

The Morrison government—again, I note it was a coalition government—passed legislation in 2020 to allow superannuation splitting between separating de facto couples in Western Australia. I asked the Attorney General to expedite reforms in our state to allow de facto couples to split their superannuation upon separation. I asked question without notice 362 of the hardworking, reliable Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General on 24 June last year. The parliamentary secretary was obviously obliged to read the response from the Attorney General —

> The McGowan government is aware of the injustice stemming from the Family Court of Western Australia being unable to split superannuation for de facto couples. As a result of the WA Attorney General's approaches to commonwealth Attorneys-General dating back to 2017, the commonwealth government eventually acted to remedy the situation. The commonwealth Parliament passed the Family Law Amendment (Western Australian De Facto Superannuation Splitting and Bankruptcy) Act 2020, which received royal assent on 8 December 2020. Amendments to the Western Australian Family Court Act 1997 to facilitate the changes made by the commonwealth act will be introduced into the Parliament as soon as practicable.

I note that the date of that response—that interaction, that dialogue—was 24 June 2021, and here we are more than a year later. Over 12 months has passed, and instead of expediting that reform, the Attorney General has taken the opportunity in the intervening period to progress other things, such as the infamous so-called electoral reform that will abolish representation in the regions. Of course, the Attorney General cannot then be responsible necessarily for the expediting of other legislation passed by the McGowan government, whether it be the puppy farming bill or other so-called priorities, such as banning the building of a highway that the government has no intention to build in this term of government in any event. Those types of matters have received expedited, priority access in this Parliament whilst this type of reform has continued to sit in abeyance.

It is the case that de facto matters accounted for 47.5 per cent of matters before the Family Court of Western Australia as at June 2022, and 20.4 per cent of those were in relation to financial and property matters. That is pursuant to information provided to the opposition. We were briefed on this bill on 26 April this year and responses came back to, if you like, questions on notice we asked at the briefing confirming those statistics. The Attorney General was recently found to be unreliable by the Federal Court and has taken the opportunity during the passage of this bill, particularly in the other place, to point the finger at the Liberal Party for not implementing this important reform sooner. I take the opportunity to remind the Attorney General about a few facts to remove him from his confusion. First of all, creating a scheme for de facto superannuation splitting in Western Australia requires cooperation between the federal and state governments. Secondly, the federal government must accept referral of the constitutional power from Western Australia in order to amend the federal Family Law Act 1975 to allow super splitting for WA de facto couples. Then it is up to our state to amend its own laws to give effect to this reform. Thirdly, such a referral was made to the Howard government in 2006 by the then Labor Carpenter government with the support of the Liberal opposition.

That process in itself took some three years. I am reminded of a speech delivered at the time by Hon Simon O'Brien. On 13 April 2006, responding on behalf of the opposition to the Commonwealth Powers (De Facto Relationships) Bill 2005, he said, in part —

> I am intrigued that it has taken such a long time for the government to progress this matter since 2003. It was first introduced into this place in December 2003 … We could all grow very old before this bill is progressed! If the government is keen to progress it, as ever, the opposition will facilitate that.

When it comes to this particular reform, despite the rhetoric from time to time, particularly from the current Attorney General, the truth is the reforms tend to go slowly under Labor's watch. In particular, from 2007—that being the year immediately following those comments by Hon Simon O'Brien when the then Liberal opposition facilitated the passage of a government bill—the Rudd and Gillard governments had six years to accept WA's referral of powers regarding superannuation splitting for de facto couples. The Morrison government—I note it was a coalition government—decided to accept and implement the narrow referral of power for de facto super splitting in October 2018. I say that acknowledging—this is why it ought to be a bipartisan reform—that the Morrison government's acceptance of the referral was at the instigation of the current Attorney General of Western Australia. The opposition does not quibble with the fact that Hon John Quigley did advocate on this matter as far back as 2017 and achieved the necessary agreement with the coalition government at a federal level from October 2018 onwards. For the Attorney General in his remarks to continue to suggest that this entire episode lays at the feet and is the fault of the Liberal Party is manifestly untrue when one considers that his own party held the Treasury bench at a federal level from 2007.

In the time since the acceptance of the referral, Western Australia has been waiting for this particular reform. It could have been done at any stage in the forty-first Parliament. It is a matter of public record that the government continues to have control of both houses of Parliament and that reforms and bills can fly through both houses, almost in a microsecond at times, even when there is opposition to a bill. In this particular instance, when there is bipartisan support for the bill, there is no good reason why it has taken this long. With all due respect to the unreliable Attorney General, he can spare us his confused attempt to set out an unreliable chronology of the history of this matter; instead, I would prefer to see that this reform, which I have advocated for in this Parliament, along with the Attorney General and others, receives bipartisan support and is dealt with on the first day that the government has brought it into the Legislative Council.

For the benefit of the stakeholders who have been quite exasperated with how long this has taken—not only the family law practitioners, but, more pertinently, their clients—I make the point, and underscore it, that today, 18 August 2022, is the first day that this bill has ever been brought on for debate in the Legislative Council. In a few moments when I finish speaking on behalf of the opposition—I understand that I am the only speaker for the opposition on this bill—there is no good reason why the bill will not pass on the same day that the government brought it in, such is the level of bipartisan support.

In that same spirit, I have also indicated behind the chair to the hardworking, reliable parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General that it is not my intention to go into Committee of the Whole on this 39-clause bill. I do not think he will mind me saying that he was mildly surprised by my approach. I would have to go back to my records to check, but it may well be the first bill in this forty-first Parliament that I have responsibility for on behalf of the opposition for which that will indeed be the case.

I want to make two quick points about that. First, I do not want the government to think that this is some form of precedent; that said, to the extent that it could be seen as a precedent, the approach that the government has taken on the consultation of this bill is instructive. The reason why I am not seeking for us to go into Committee of the Whole House on this bill is that some significant consultation has occurred—not rudimentary consultation, significant consultation. Subject matter experts outside of government were provided with draft copies of this bill in advance of it appearing in Parliament and they have had the opportunity to consider the bill in its final form. The subject matter experts outside of government are entirely satisfied with the 39 clauses. I have conferred with both the Family Law Practitioners' Association of Western Australia, which I acknowledge at this time, and Community Legal Western Australia, which I also acknowledge at this time. Those subject matter experts outside of government have been properly consulted and I commend the approach the government has taken in doing so with respect to this bill. This is an example of how we can facilitate quality legislation in a short time on a bipartisan basis. Therefore, if government members are in any way looking to see this matter as a precedent, I ask them to consider all that context because it is a good example of how we can progress legislation on a consultative basis, and quality legislation at that.

With those remarks, I indicate that the bill has the support of the opposition.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [2.33 pm]: I want to make a fairly small contribution on the Family Court Amendment Bill 2022. Obviously, I do not have the level of expertise of Hon Nick Goiran, my good friend and colleague. I will not speak from the position of being a lawyer, but I can speak as someone who has experienced the Family Court system and as someone who has worked in the federal

sphere and has spent a lot of time dealing with people who are struggling with Family Court issues. I will not make a big contribution, but I will make a few critical points.

The opposition supports the bill before the house today, as was well enunciated by Hon Nick Goiran. Splitting superannuation makes obvious sense that when splitting assets, particularly in cases in which there are no other assets to distribute than the superannuation. If a couple has not been able to make significant savings, pay off a house or do other things, the superannuation component of their assets is sometimes not only the most significant asset but the only asset. We have a legal system that does not allow the Family Court to split their only asset; for example, if they have superannuation and a car each, they will end up with a very unfair outcome. Therefore, it makes sense that this power should be given to the Family Court of Western Australia through the legislative process that will be put in place.

I will make a couple of comments about the process, though. This is not something that the parliamentary secretary can fix. I am just making these comments as "this is where we are going to get to". In some circumstances, there may be an issue about the welfare of, potentially, both parties. Many people, let us call them the baby boomer generation—no insult to any baby boomers present; I have just managed to slip out of there and into the next category, luckily for me, because apparently everything in the world is the baby boomers fault!—may have very few assets other than their superannuation. They probably did not start compulsory superannuation until about 1991 or 1992, give or take a year—someone might know the date better than I. I remember it coming in; I might be the only one who was old enough at the time, sadly, who was running a business. People in that older generation who started superannuation early did not seem to accumulate significant levels of superannuation until after they had raised children, attained a reasonable age and their income was at a reasonable level, because superannuation really starts to accumulate in people's 40s and 50s.

For a lot of the baby boomer generation, the problem is that if superannuation was the only asset they were able to accumulate, it will not be sufficient for either a single person or a couple to retire on. If they split it, their superannuation will be a fairly small amount. If they have managed to put aside only $200 000 in super—the average amount of superannuation in accounts today is not significantly high—and they split it, they will end up with $100 000 each and basically go backwards very quickly. That is not to suggest for a minute that the superannuation asset should not be split and distributed between two former partners, because it absolutely must, but one of the issues will be that both of those people will be starting over with a very low asset base. Obviously, we have a system in place and those people will probably be on some sort of pension going forward. A lot of baby boomers are retiring now with a small amount of superannuation, some superannuation payments and a part pension. That is the safety net that we as a humane society have put in place, and it is one of the things that we are proposing to pass today. For a while there, the interest rate that superannuation was earning was pretty significant, but it has corrected as the economic circumstances have corrected. Therefore, although this is a necessary thing, we must be aware of some are potential financial impacts.

The other comment that I will make—it is a good thing and again there is nothing that the parliamentary secretary can do about the second part of my contribution—is that I suspect the angst about the Family Court will remain. Taking people through that process is incredibly complex and emotional. The problem with working in that federal sphere, of course, is that most people generally assume it is federal legislation. Over the years that I spent in the outer, as it were, between the period I spent in the other place and this place, I spent a fair bit of time working in that federal sphere in a federal office dealing with family law issues.

Luckily, I have been through the process myself. To be completely frank, my Family Court experience did not relate to distribution of assets; that was agreed by us well and truly in advance. The winners in a relationship breakdown are all the people who never get to the Family Court. Heaven forbid that all the people who go through a relationship breakdown end up at the Family Court because the court would never survive and I do not imagine that the system would manage. The good news out of the Family Court debate has always been that the majority of people never arrive at that system; the majority of people, in some way, shape or form are trying to do the right thing—sometimes, I suspect, even those who give up and find it all too hard. The majority of people do not get to the Family Court and that is a victory. Members might question that but the number of relationship breakdowns compared with the number of cases in the Family Court tell an absolute story. Apart from potentially rubberstamping a decree nisi or something, for example, the majority do not actually host a case in the Family Court. That is probably a good thing because going to the Family Court in itself is a horrendous experience to go through.

My experience was over custody, and it was a difficult and emotional experience. I had a really interesting experience; I do not think I have ever said this in this chamber. I said it in the other place, many years ago. I had the interesting experience of a Family Court judge in my custody battle dispute who said, "You are both good parents so it does not really matter who I give the child to, so I am going to find the smallest thing that I do not like in one case and, basically, make a decision on that." The judge who said that is retired these days. I will do him the courtesy of not naming him, but that was the view of the Family Court judge in my case. I was represented by a barrister who went on to be a Family Court judge to replace the judge that made that comment in open court. I said this in the lower

house. No-one was able to correct him because it was said in open court. He basically said his decision would be arbitrary, which was a horrendous position to take and was, perhaps, reflective of the time that he should have gone and retired.

In reflection and debate around the Family Court, I have a secret to talking to people in an electorate office, for example. Some members may have people come in; this is how I explain the actions of that judge and the difficulty around the system. Normally, people come in far too late. I find that I can help people with a Family Court action if they come in at the start of the process. They say their relationship has broken down and I say, "Well, here are the things that you can do to try to assist the process." The problem is that they come in and they say, "I am in court for the judgement in a week's time, and I think I am losing. Someone needs to do something about it." They look for politics to step in and fix a legal issue. We have to explain that it would be highly improper for politicians to change the outcome of a legal case by interfering in the case. It would be a horrendous outcome. I suspect we would become the definition of a banana republic. We do not want to do that. In my view, the secret to the process has always been that the Family Court is very tough and people should not necessarily expect justice when they go in there because that is not what it delivers. The Family Court often delivers the outcome that it can live with the best, and that is not necessarily the best outcome for anybody in the process. Certainly, in my experience of custody dispute, it was arbitrary. The judge said the decision is not made in the interest of either party in the case but in the interests of the child, but I actually do not think that is true. It is not actually made in the best interests of the child. The decision is made in the best interests of the court—the decision that the court can live with the easiest. It is a very tough and complex process. Some of the things the court would do if it applied the law absolutely could not be enforced so it does not do that. It applies the outcome that the court itself thinks it can live with. If there is ever any doubt, I will find the legal transcript of the case that I went through to show that some of the outcomes are completely arbitrary.

With those few words, the opposition absolutely supports what the government is doing with this bill. When there are very few assets, it makes sense that the assets are shared evenly. I use a rough rule of thumb; the parliamentary secretary might be able to tell me whether this is relatively accurate. When people come in to discuss it, particularly when we are talking about the distribution of assets, I use the rough rule of thumb that, as a general rule, the court will look at what each party brought into the relationship, the assets that were accumulated during the relationship, and will generally attempt, if possible—children and maintenance in custody notwithstanding—to separate those assets that were brought into the relationship, and distribute and deem, as equally earned, any assets that were developed during the relationship. That is the rule of thumb that I use; I do not think it is written in law. I think there is a precedent that looks a bit similar to that. I am a bit interested to know whether the parliamentary secretary can advise us if there is a rule of thumb. The court will probably say it does everything based on the case before it and there is no rule of thumb, but I suspect there is; a precedent exists. I do not think the court—except in a very unguarded moment—would ever say that its decision is arbitrary in open court but, in my case, this particular judge did. I am interested to know what the parliamentary secretary thinks.

Normally, we would assume that superannuation, as an asset accumulated during a relationship, should certainly be shared. The parliamentary secretary may not be able to give any indication beyond that about what a rule of thumb might look like but, if he can, I would appreciate it; if he cannot, I do not really mind. It is not the end of the world. The opposition, led by our lead speaker on this bill, Hon Nick Goiran, is absolutely supportive of the intent of the government to share the assets as best it can, particularly when there are few or no other assets to distribute. Any information the parliamentary secretary can give will be useful, but we are certainly still supportive of the bill.

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.47 pm] — in reply: From the outset, I would like to thank the opposition for its approach to this bill. I take the points made by Hon Nick Goiran about it not necessarily being precedent-setting. I was sitting down, as he suggested I should be, when he advised me that the opposition will not go into committee,

All jokes aside, I appreciate that the opposition has engaged with this bill in a constructive and bipartisan manner. I think it is important that I continue in that vein in my reply. I will leave some of the points the member made about the Attorney General's comments in the other place for the member and Attorney General to battle out. I will not put myself in the middle of that because I am not sure —

Hon Nick Goiran: It has been my experience that he won't hesitate to reply.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: That is up to the Attorney General, of course.

Putting that aside, I take the manner in which this is being dealt with in good faith. I also want to thank the member for bringing those two case examples and putting those circumstances on the parliamentary record because I think we sometimes legislate in the abstract here and we sometimes take away from what it is that we do and the effect that does or does not have on people outside of this place. The two examples that Hon Nick Goiran gave—Sally and Steve's case and Cheryl's case—were excellent examples. I am glad that the stakeholders provided those and

that we are able to talk about them because that really is the mischief we are trying to deal with in this bill. I do appreciate that.

I will say something about the delay. I think the delay has been a bit of a pox on all houses. The reform for married couples happened in 2001 and it was extended to de facto couples in 2008, but it is now 2022. There have been changes of government at the state and federal level on both sides. I appreciate the efforts of the former commonwealth Attorney General, who helped to secure the passage of the bill in late 2020 that is now enabling us to pass this legislation here, which will make an absolutely meaningful difference to many people in de facto relationships.

With respect to the rule of thumb that Hon Dr Steve Thomas asked me about, I cannot speak to that. It goes beyond the bill here. As the member has experienced, family law matters are complex. The distribution of property between splitting couples is also complex and will depend very much on their individual circumstances. I cannot say that there is a particular rule of thumb; there are general principles, for example, and the court is looking for an equitable distribution of the property between the two couples, but what that might look like, I cannot say. I do not have enough information in the short time to give the member a more fulsome answer than that, but what I will say about Family Court proceedings is that we must remember that in all proceedings that come before the court for adjudication, at least two people are in conflict with each other. When two people are in conflict with each other, there are going to be two versions of events. There are competing but not necessarily less valid interests, and the court is put in the unenviable position of having to make a decision on those competing interests and to try to resolve that conflict.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Would you take an interjection on that? We are not going into committee.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Yes.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: I agree with you; you are absolutely right. The issue is, when I said about the easiest outcome for the court, what the court tends to do is pick a winner and a loser. They do not specifically say, "You win, you lose", but they empower one person and disempower the other, because to balance the power is almost too hard for the court to enforce, so the outcome that might be best—something more mutual—is actually not delivered. What is delivered is a disempowerment, because that is the easiest thing for the court to deliver. That was my point. The parliamentary secretary is absolutely right in what he says about the complexity, anger and animosity. By the time they get to the court, it is terrible.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: It is the truth for all legal proceedings. As soon as someone takes a matter to court, they give the decision to someone else to make and take it out of their own hands. It does not matter if it is the Family Court, the District Court for a civil matter, the Magistrates Court or the industrial tribunals; as soon as they ask another person outside of the two of them to make the decision for them, they are disempowering themselves to some degree. But in terms of the member's general comments about the court, I think that there are a lot of very hardworking people within the Family Court system who overwhelmingly are trying to do the right thing by the people and especially the children who come before them. I suspect we can find examples of things that absolutely should have been done better, but I think, overwhelmingly, most matters through the Family Court proceed with a degree of dignity, finality and respect. We tend to focus on the cases in which things did not go well. It is a universal truth that we can all do things better, and I suspect that applies to the courts, but, overwhelmingly, the people who work in that jurisdiction are trying to do the right thing. It is not an easy jurisdiction to work in. When I was in law school, people asked me whether I was going to study family law, and I said, "No, thank you, I'll stay well away from that." The people who do choose to practise in family law—the lawyers, judges and court staff and all those who support them—deserve our praise. It is not easy to turn up every day and deal with people who are probably at very much the worst point in their lives. I appreciate all those people, and the two organisations Hon Nick Goiran gave a shout-out to. He also stated in his contribution that they deserve recognition for the contributions that they make.

I do not have a lot more to add in reply, other than to reiterate our appreciation for the opposition and the other members' indulgence to proceed with this bill as expeditiously as we can.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Members, we are dealing with the Family Court Amendment Bill 2022 and the question is that the bill be read a second time. I remind members that when the chair is speaking, all movement in the chamber will cease.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by **Hon Matthew Swinbourn (Parliamentary Secretary)**, and passed.