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# This man and hundreds more can finally have their gay convictions expunged

By Felicity Caldwell

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## Talking Points

- Historical gay convictions can now be wiped from criminal records.
- It was estimated that over 95 years, 464 people were charged under the laws.
- People will have to apply to have convictions from before 1991 expunged.

- 1 A legacy of Queensland's "cruel" and draconian anti-homosexual laws has finally been demolished.

In Parliament on Tuesday night, Queensland politicians passed legislation to allow hundreds of victims to apply to expunge historical gay convictions from their criminal records, meaning they could deny they were ever charged.



Alan Raabe on May 11, 2017 in Brisbane, Australia.

*Photo: Robert Shakespeare*

In Queensland, homosexuality was a crime until 1991, and people could be charged with offences ranging from indecency, to unnatural offences and sodomy.

But despite no longer being a crime, many men who were charged were still forced to face the stigma of admitting they had a criminal record when applying for a job or travelling overseas.

One of those men, [Alan Raabe](#), has lived with a criminal conviction since 1988 when he fell victim to a police sting targeting gay behaviour.



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His "crime" was brushing the groin of an undercover police officer, who had lured him into a dark corner of a park late at night, and it devastated his career.

Following a [historic apology](#) by Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk to people charged under the historic gay offences earlier this year, Mr Raabe said it was like the dark cloud which had followed him for half his life had cleared.

Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath said the convictions humiliated and hurt people who found themselves in the criminal justice system.

She said anecdotal evidence suggested LGBTIQ people were prosecuted under public morality offences if they dressed or behaved in a gender or sexuality non-conforming manner.

public place. and would not be allowed to be expunged under an earlier draft of the bill, despite members of the public never seeing their activities.

An earlier draft of the bill would not have allowed them to be expunged, despite members of the public never seeing their activities.

People will be able to apply to the director-general of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for expungement of convictions or charges relating to conduct up until January 19, 1991.

The provision covers convictions involving homosexual activity such as anal sex, indecent acts or "public morality offences".

Environment Minister Steven Miles said the year 1990, when laws passed to decriminalise consensual gay sex in Queensland, was not that long ago.

"Bob Hawke was prime minister, George Bush Senior was president, and after 11 years, Margaret Thatcher was packing up 10 Downing Street," he said.

"*Twin Peaks* had just premiered on the ABC, Milli Vanilli's producer had shocked the world by disclosing that they'd been lip-synching the whole time and *Die Hard 2* had just come out.

"How incredible to think that just that short while ago you could go to jail just because of who you love.

"Gay men in Queensland were targeted, tricked and charged using laws that were borne out of bigotry, hatred and fear of anything different."

Shadow Attorney-General Ian Walker said the LNP recognised the significance of the reforms for those impacted by past laws and policing practices and would support the bill.

"We recognise this is an important issue for many people in the community," he said.

"We hope the processes apply as simply and efficiently for those involved and this goes some way towards easing the pain and suffering caused to many in years gone by."

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we could express that," Ms Boyd said.

Member for Coomera Michael Crandon, who sat on the committee that considered the bill, said the committee heard about the pain that so many people had suffered for so many years as a result of the convictions.

Many MPs, including Deputy Premier Jackie Trad, spoke about the ongoing same-sex marriage postal survey, describing it as an unnecessary and insulting discourse on the rights of LGBTIQ people to marry.



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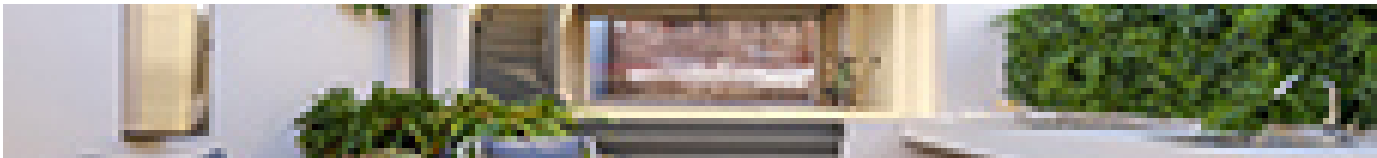


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