



Speech by

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SOUTH BANK CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—ONP) (11.14 a.m.): In line with what the Leader of the Opposition has said about being people conscious, we realise that the South Bank Corporation Amendment Bill allows the changing of the land use leases to accommodate the Mirvac redevelopment, for the construction of the pedestrian and cycle bridge and the building of a residential, retail and commercial development at the South Bank parklands.

The Premier in his second-reading speech talked about Brisbane's reputation as the most livable city in Australia and said that a crucial focus of this vision is the redevelopment and enhancement of South Bank as one of the great city parklands and open spaces in the world. I am sure that this Bill will aid the Premier's vision and that South Bank will be enhanced by the development. My concern lies with priorities.

I would prefer Brisbane's reputation as one of the most livable capital cities in Australia to come from a different source—from the adequate provision of essential services, the necessary help for children who walk our streets at night and the required safety and protection of our citizens. Would it not be wonderful if Brisbane had the reputation as the most livable city in Australia because our hospitals were adequately staffed and funded so that waiting queues were non-existent, or because we had adequate resources to protect young children on the streets by taking them home or to somewhere they could be cared and catered for, or maybe because we had punishments that reflected the crimes in order to create a real deterrent, allowing people Brisbane to walk around in safety in the evening or sleep comfortably in their homes? I am sure my point is made.

It saddens me to see so much wrong with our State and our country, and this is matched by weak leaders who value money and prestige above quality of life issues for those they are elected to represent. A pedestrian bridge that has seats under archways of flowers and shade to protect people from the sun sounds divine, but is it necessary when there are so many more worthy projects that the money could be spent on?

In his second-reading speech the Premier talked about the extent of consultation over the bridge. He mentioned the overwhelming three out of every four people supporting the bridge and the enthusiastic support of various groups around the city. I am sure that the consultation was fairly conducted and honestly done. I wonder, however, what the result would have been if the question had not been asked solely about the bridge. What would the outcome have been if the question was asked more about support for the bridge or additional funding for the PA Hospital for more urgently required extra nursing staff? The outcome may have been entirely different. I would like to believe that the hospital would easily have received more public support than a pedestrian/cycle bridge in the middle of the city.

The State's health system is in a state of collapse. Massive waiting lists attest to the suffering of so many Queenslanders. The average battling family is forced to endure savage increases in Government fees and charges. In the midst of all of this economic vandalism, the Government suddenly finds a spare \$30m lying around and decides to fritter it away in support of the footbridge. The cost-benefit analysis would make fairly interesting reading. Granted, the project will provide some short-term jobs.

Before I continue with my speech, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of students from a school in my electorate. Will this project deliver the much-needed resourcing improvements in our

education system? No. Will it provide extra police to ensure the improved safety of our citizens and particularly at-risk groups such as the aged, the infirm and the young? No. Does it show that this Government, like most Governments, has its priorities in the right order? No.

Another aspect of this Bill is that it reinforces the arrogance of this Government and its penchant for legislating change rather than following standard process. We saw the standover methods in operation when this Government used legislation to dispossess the Noble family of their freehold land and destroy their catering business.

This is a Government out of control. This is a Government that will not allow the rights of ordinary Queenslanders to delay its grandiose schemes. How can we respect a Government that is prepared to use legislative process as a weapon to ride roughshod over proper administrative process and over the hopes and aspirations of its citizens?

I realise that the Premier must feel compassion for his colleague Mr Soorley, who is approaching his judgment day at the ballot box. Indeed, the Premier and Mr Soorley probably feel great compassion for each other as they struggle desperately in the face of rapidly falling public support and rapidly rising public contempt over their constant stumbles from crisis to crisis and from scandal to scandal. My heart bleeds for both of them, but I consider it obscene for the Premier even to contemplate using desperately needed public funds to prop up Jim Soorley's tired image and to deflect attention from his own accident-prone Ministers and members. It is appalling to contemplate Soorley's grotesque erection rising over our beautiful Brisbane River as a monument to his imminent departure from public office. Thousands of disadvantaged Queenslanders will be disappointed and disgusted to see desperately needed funding being wasted on a self-indulgent project which will benefit just a few.

We are unable to support his Bill because of its inequitable nature. Thousands of disadvantaged Queenslanders could well benefit from these funds, rather than a few cyclists in the centre of Brisbane.
