



Speech by

MIKE REYNOLDS

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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NELLY BAY DEVELOPMENT, MAGNETIC ISLAND

Mr REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (6.35 p.m.): I find it amusing that the Opposition Leader is calling on the House to support the Government's handling of the Nelly Bay harbour development at Magnetic Island, given the gross mishandling of the Nelly Bay issue by the former coalition Government. The Opposition Leader had two and a half years to fix up the mess at Nelly Bay, but chose instead to sit on his hands and do nothing. It was left to the Beattie Labor Government to progress this matter further.

I also find it amusing that Mr Borbidge sees fit to lampoon my interest in the concerns of my electorate. Surely this strikes at the very heart of the Westminster system of democracy. What is he proposing that I do—turn a deaf ear to dissenting voices, just as his own party does time and time again? Let me remind the Opposition Leader that one of the truly great aspects of the democratic system of Government is that it acknowledges that everyone in the community has an equal voice, regardless of their social or financial status.

Let me also inform the Opposition Leader that one of the truly great aspects of the Australian Labor Party is its ability to incorporate this kind of democratic thinking in its very own party structure. He slags off at Labor's faction system only because his party has no means of coping with different but aligned political perspectives. In the National Party one either agrees with the autocrat at the top of the tree or one goes to join the One Nation camp. There is simply no provision made for civilised discourse among individuals.

I take this opportunity to reiterate that my first obligation as a member of Parliament is to represent the interests of my electorate. I do not just mean the interests of developers and real estate agents at the top end of town. I have stated on the public record time and time again my strong support for the Nelly Bay harbour development. I campaigned hard before the election for \$6m to be committed in the September State Budget to a safe harbour at Nelly Bay. My bottom line has always been to make absolutely certain that the aged, the frail, families with small children and people with a disability get the safest possible harbour at Nelly Bay. That is why I am speaking up now.

I believe some finetuning is required of this development plan before it delivers Magnetic Islanders the safest possible harbour at Nelly Bay. Let me remind the House that the Government is spending \$6m of public money on this project. As the local member, I must make sure that this investment buys us the very best solution, not some second-best option. In the current development plan, the ferry terminal at Nelly Bay is located right at the entrance to the harbour and is exposed to the elements, particularly strong wave action. To ensure public safety, I believe that the ferry terminal should be situated deeper into the harbour where it was going to be under the original 1988 plan that, as Mayor of Townsville, I approved as well.

This view is based on overwhelming scientific and engineering evidence that the current proposed location is not as safe as it could be, and for the Opposition Leader's sake, let me list the experts who present the evidence. Firstly, the Marine Modelling Unit at James Cook University has recommended that the ferry terminal be located further back in the harbour. Secondly, the joint environmental assessment report completed by the Federal and State Governments has determined that the proposed location of ferry berths near the harbour entrance is undesirable. Members opposite do not want to listen to this. Thirdly, Senator Robert Hill—he is on the same side of politics as the

Opposition Leader—has requested that the developer consult with the Queensland Department of Transport about a safer location for the ferry terminal. Senator Hill specifically asked that the developer consider locating the ferry terminal deeper into the harbour where the barge landing is currently planned.

So the very process that the Opposition Leader is supporting in the House tonight has enabled this evidence to come to light. Now we have it. What is he proposing to do? Turn a blind eye! That might be the sort of politics that he practises, but on our side of the House we do things differently. If he supports Government process, then he supports my right to have input to the Government on the concerns of my constituents. Of course, his intention may not be to vindicate my part in the process at all. Let me say that the vilification of anyone expressing a view contrary to that put by the Nelly Bay developers and the Opposition has been par for the course over the past three years. The Nelly Bay developers and their supporters, in common with the Opposition Leader, do not like criticism, even if it is constructive and well supported by evidence.

Many Magnetic Islanders have told me that they have been intimidated by the vilification going on. The proof of such vilification was in evidence in the Townsville Bulletin yesterday, with the developer inciting violence against me. Is the Opposition Leader going to do the same? This is the kind of police State we get when the white shoe brigade of the National Party runs the show. It is not the kind of community life that the Beattie Labor Government encourages.

In the next few days, I will be meeting with Ministers to discuss the need for finetuning of the Nelly Bay development plan. This is part of the normal Government process, which I support. I will be discussing the evidence which shows conclusively that the ferry terminal would be best located deep in the harbour. I will be making very strong representations on behalf of my electorate, and I make no apology for that. In my mind, I am simply doing my job. The Premier and the Deputy Premier have told me that they expect nothing less of me. The Opposition Leader might blithely and without question support the case put by developers and real estate agents.

Time expired.
