



Speech by

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE**

**MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE**

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Hansard 29 October 1999

**SOUTH BANK CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11 a.m.): The Opposition will be supporting this legislation, but I will make a few comments in respect of it. I welcome a second-reading speech from the Premier and the Government that is what a second-reading speech should be. I place on the record that historically in this place second-reading speeches are supposed to detail what the legislation seeks to do, because there have been occasions in the past when those second-reading speeches have been used in court cases in respect of determining the Government's intent in regard to certain matters.

There has been a long convention in this place that political debate should ensue after the second-reading speech. If Ministers want to give the Opposition a belt, they do so in their reply. I make that observation because this Government is moving away from that convention. I know that in previous second-reading speeches in regard to other matters the Premier has also strayed from that convention. I commend him on a second-reading speech that observes the conventions of this place.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr D'Arcy): Order! I have taken advice from the Clerk. I heard the Leader of the Opposition comment when the Minister for Fair Trading was on her feet. It was my opinion and the Clerk's that that complaint should be taken to the Standing Orders Committee. I think that is the proper forum for dealing with that matter.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I appreciate your response to that. If we get some cooperation across the Chamber, it may be possible to address that particular issue. I like a scrap in here as much as the Premier or anyone else, but it is matter of following the conventions of this place. Historically, the time to have a scrap has been during the process of the debate. That is a proud tradition of this place. I would hope that it would be observed by this Government.

I understand the urgency of the legislation. I know that the parliamentary sitting program is becoming tight. We have three or four weeks of four-day sittings ahead of us. I have no objection to the legislation being debated today. However, the South Bank Corporation Amendment Bill has gone from being No. 28 on the notice paper yesterday to No. 1 today. As a matter of courtesy and respect to the House, those sorts of matters could be managed a little better. No doubt there will be more of this as the bureaucratic sausage machine winds up and Ministers get told by their respective directors-general that the end of the world is nigh if the "Blowfly Amendment Act 1932" is not passed by the end of this year's sittings. I make those observations in a constructive manner in respect of ensuring that this place works a little better in the tense weeks that are ahead of us.

This legislation basically continues the development plan that was approved and legislated for during the period of the previous coalition Government. I have no difficulties with the legislation. In fact, it enshrines certain principles that I legislated for when I was Premier. We realised, as the current Government realises, that the land tenure arrangements in respect of South Bank were simply not secure enough to attract the major investment amounts that are needed to make South Bank what we know it will become. The precedent was set by the previous coalition Government when I introduced legislation to give a perpetual lease to Thieß, which resulted in Thieß establishing its Australian head office—which opened recently—at South Bank.

I will make a couple of observations and express a couple of concerns. These are not meant to be critical of the South Bank Corporation nor the Government. I think possibly both sides of politics

have overlooked the dilemma that, once we decided to commit to the redevelopment of South Bank, it would in large part become a construction site again for a period of years. I know that there have been some traders at South Bank who have experienced a degree of difficulty as a result of the major commitment by both Governments to make sure that this outstanding capital city of ours had a precinct such as South Bank that would be up there with the best that could be found anywhere in the world.

So as not to jeopardise the important work of South Bank, I have adopted a policy of not raising some of those concerns or the individual cases publicly. I know that the South Bank Corporation has made a very concerted effort in seeking to accommodate some of those concerns. I believe we have to accept that this work was begun by Government; both sides of politics made a commitment to the upgrade. It started under my Government and it is continuing under the present Government. We have a responsibility—not just the South Bank Corporation—to the many businesses that have suffered a quite extreme dislocation of income as a result of the decisions of the Governments of the day and the decisions of the two Parliaments that have been dealing with that issue recently. I seek an assurance by the Premier that he will keep those particular concerns under control.

This legislation deals with the bridge. The proposed bridge has been somewhat of a controversial addition. I know that residents in the apartment blocks were very concerned initially. My advice is that the deal that has been done which effectively repositions the bridge and brings it in alongside the Maritime Museum has effectively evaporated a lot of the concern and angst. Clearly, people did not want a cycle bridge or a pedestrian bridge going past their bedroom window, particularly when they had just paid a few hundred thousand dollars for their apartments. Whilst noting the enormous public support for the bridge, I seek the assurance of the Premier that the concerns relating to those residents who were going to be impacted upon have essentially been addressed and that those people have withdrawn their reservations and objections.

I also seek some advice from the Premier in regard to whether the plight of traders during construction is being or may be aggravated as a result of the realignment of the route of the light rail and whether that has caused or will cause any complications. I understand that some realignment is now considered necessary. In view of the concerns many of the traders have had and the loss of business they have experienced, I would appreciate an assurance in that regard.

I believe that we can be very proud of the work of the South Bank Corporation. I pay tribute to Steve Wilson, who is one of this State's most respected businessmen. I was delighted when he accepted my invitation to take on the chairmanship of the South Bank Corporation. I am delighted that the current Premier has kept him in that position.

I know that we have to be people conscious as we go about the redevelopment of South Bank. I think that initially, with the enthusiasm of all that was going on over there, perhaps both sides of the House lost sight of the financial and other impact of that work as people struggled to make their businesses operate in what has now become a construction site for the best part of two or three years from start to finish of this stage of the redevelopment.

At the end of the day, I believe the master plan will give Brisbane something that no other capital city in Australia has. It will be one of the great people precincts potentially of any major city anywhere in the world. It is an investment in the future of our city. It is important that we nurture it and that we make sure we maximise the opportunities that the South Bank redevelopment does offer.

I understand from the Premier's second-reading speech and from my knowledge that the approval of this legislation sets the pace for Mirvac to proceed with its \$100m residential, retail and commercial development. I have seen the plans. I believe it will be a tremendous addition to the City of Brisbane.

It is great to see that the private sector is keen to consolidate its position as a partner with Government in respect of South Bank. The reason it is prepared to do that is the reason this legislation is before the House. It is why similar legislation was before the previous Parliament during the term of the coalition Government. That is, if we want companies to invest \$100m to help create something very special, they have to have security of tenure. They have to have the security to be able to satisfy their financiers that their particular proposals are viable and that they stack up. That is essentially the reason this legislation has been introduced into the House.

I am pleased that the current Premier is following the precedent set by Thiess. No doubt it may be revisited in respect of other development proposals down the track. The reality is that that is the only way we can expect the private sector to make the large capital investments that are required to give us the quality product at the end of the day that I am sure members on both sides of the House wish to see evolve as South Bank evolves. The Opposition supports the legislation.

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