



Speech by

**BILL FELDMAN**

**MEMBER FOR CABOOLTURE**

---

Hansard 18 October 2000

### **MORETON BAY ISLANDS**

**Mr FELDMAN** (Caboolture—CCAQ) (6.34 p.m.): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Ipswich West, Mr Jack Paff, calling for a full and open judicial inquiry into this whole sorry saga of the Moreton Bay islands. This has indeed become the benchmark for land scams not just in this State or Australia, but in the world. I say "the world", because this is the land scam to beat all land scams. The people who purchased that land in good faith are now seeing their dream turned into a nightmare.

Many people bought their land for what was a good price for island land. Instead of watching their investments accumulate and add value for their retirement, most of those people have seen their dream dissipate. As has been said before, this was the work of very grubby and very unethical salesmen. Not only did those salesmen work against these people but also these people's own representatives in local and State Government have done so. Moreover, it seems that there is some form of collusion between the State Government and the Redland Shire Council, which oversees the constituency in the southern Moreton Bay islands.

I refer to a couple of those people on that island, John Abrahamson and his wife, June. In their earlier life they were farmers. They left their farm and bought five blocks of land in Wahine Drive on Russell Island, which amounted to about one acre of land. I am not talking about one small block; I am talking about five blocks of land that were purchased in one block—one huge acre block upon which the Abrahamsons wanted to build their dream home and retire. They wanted to start a small crops farm to sustain them in their retirement. One cannot blame them for wanting to do that. They were good farmers. That is what they wanted to do: to retire on a block on the island overlooking the bay. Just as the Minister said, those people wanted to retire there.

Now, three of those blocks have been resumed for \$1,000. The unfortunate thing is that that is happening to about 99% of those blocks over there that are being resumed. During the time that that resumption was occurring, there were blocks all around the Abrahamsons' block selling for \$20,000, \$25,000 and \$32,000. The Redland Shire Council is telling people that some of these blocks have drainage problems. On some of these blocks there are houses that have been built side by side and some of them have been valued at over \$200,000, yet the block in the middle of them, which the Abrahamsons own, has been devalued to less than \$1,000. How can houses, valued at a high rate, be built side by side around this block of land, which has been devalued? This block overlooks Canaipa Passage. It is in the same area and at the same height as those other blocks that have houses on them, yet the council says that it has drainage problems. It is absolutely ridiculous.

These people want the shire council brought to task over what it is doing over there. Land is being devalued, people are being forced to sell up, and some land has been resumed. Some people have been told that their land has been devalued because septic tanks could not be put on them. Councillors from the Redland Shire Council have actually bought blocks of land on the island and I have been told that they have built them up almost one metre, and suddenly houses and septic tanks are being built on them when other people were denied being able to do that.

These people want a judicial inquiry about what is happening now—not just about what happened in the past—to their land. They have not been allowed to build on them. These people want

an inquiry that will cover every one of those aspects, not just what happened 30 years ago. They wanted to build homes on their land. They were expecting to be overlooking Canaipia Passage for the rest of their lives. But no, their dream has been shot to pieces by a council that is devaluing their land and saying that it cannot be built on.

These people deserve better than that. Some of them have been paying their rates for 30 years, to find suddenly that the council will not let them build on their land. These people want an inquiry into that. They want to find out why this council is allowed to do that, when other people are building on land without that sort of restriction.

Time expired.

---