



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR BARAMBAH

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PROPERTY AGENTS AND MOTOR DEALERS AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (4.49 p.m.): Most people who have participated in debate on the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Amendment Bill have spoken of examples of why this bill has been brought forward and the effects of unscrupulous marketeering practices on their constituents. I could do the same, but it would be merely repetitious. It is the hopeful outcome of this bill to eliminate these unscrupulous practices, and the bill has been designed to do so. These practices do catch a lot of people who trust implicitly.

People often say to me, 'It must be true or they would not be allowed to get away with it.' But they are allowed to get away with it. Hopefully, this bill will address that. A lot of the people who go to meetings on this matter are first-time buyers. They may have no real knowledge of what they are doing and the area that is being offered may be well and truly outside their scope.

Marketeering approaches are very common in my area—a rural area in which a lot of people have lived all their lives and in which probably two or three generations had lived before them. They may have hardly ever visited the coast, let alone bought a property there. So they really do not know what they are getting into.

The thing that really concerns me is that this marketeering must be fairly successful, because every few months a new wave comes through.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mrs PRATT: Highly successful. I get approached every three to six months. The flyers arrive, the phone calls start coming and so on. Out of curiosity, about three years ago I turned up to a meeting to listen. I thought I would find out as much as I could, so I feigned a bit of interest. As I already owned a fair bit of property I was a bit cluey about what was going on. Also, I know a lot of people on the coast, who gave me a lot of insight into property values there. Most of the people at that meeting did not have the experience and contacts I had, so I feigned interest on their behalf and asked a few questions. I did not pretend I was all gung-ho about it, but I pretended to be a little interested. When I left I said, 'No, thanks. I'm not really interested.' After feigning a bit of interest, the phone calls I received over the next 24 hours were quite phenomenal. A different person phoned me each time, pretending they had not been told of the person who had rung me earlier. Obviously they did not communicate very well at all, but that was their ploy. I might be blonde, but I am not stupid.

I have warned a lot of people about these practices. I do not accuse all direct marketers of being unscrupulous, but I am fairly sceptical when they will not put down in writing what they have said. I think that is probably the greatest clue people could get that marketers are unscrupulous.

I have a couple of examples of these practices in my electorate at the moment. I think the minister is aware of one as a result of information that I sent to her a few weeks ago. The people who were caught by these marketers have no real out. They have been told that if they want to take the matter further they will have to take it to court and that it will cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000, which they do not have. The money they invested in the very first instance was superannuation money. I think that is a real shame. The second example involved a life insurance policy. The situation was sad enough without the involvement of one of these marketers. It has tied up this person's life forever.

The constituents of other members seem to be like mine. They are honest, they are hardworking, they expect people to be honest in dealing with them and they trust. That is what these people rely on. My constituents are not ignorant; they are just trusting and they get caught. I congratulate the minister in endeavouring to overcome a painful problem for many of these people.
