



Speech by

CHRIS CUMMINS

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard 30 July 2002

LAND TAX AMENDMENT BILL

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (3.02 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Land Tax Amendment Bill 2002. It makes a number of amendments to the Land Tax Act 1915 necessary to implement initiatives, following a state budget which saw record spending in my electorate of Kawana. Acknowledging what has been mentioned earlier, I take on board that we ought not mention the state budget, which saw record funding to the electorate of Kawana, which is fast becoming the educational heart and educational node of the Sunshine Coast. In that state budget, which I will not mention, we saw record funding for the Mountain Creek TAFE—which I am very happy with—for education and training; Chancellor State High School, with a \$3 million commitment; Chancellor State Primary School, with funding for more school rooms; and Kawana Waters State High School, with \$200,000-plus for improvements to the Sportsman's Parade. Buderim Mountain School was also very grateful—

Mr HORAN: I rise on a point of order. The member should not be talking about the budget and schools, and all the rest of it. If the rule is good enough for one, it is good enough for everybody.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! Actually, I gave you reasonable leeway.

Mr CUMMINS: I take on board those comments. I will continue on with the Land Tax Amendment Bill. As we know, land tax is an important revenue source, contributing \$231 million in 2001-02 of total states own-source revenue. The Land Tax Act 1915 provides for the assessment of land tax at progressive rates on the aggregate of the unimproved value of freehold land owned as at midnight on 30 June in each year. Individuals, other than trustees and absentees, receive a reduction of \$200,000. Land owners may also be eligible to receive a concession where the land is used as a principal place of residence—a very good thing, obviously—or is used for the business of agriculture, pasturage or dairy farming. It is quite amazing that the former Country Party is opposing these positive initiatives.

The act provides an exemption threshold of \$100,000 for taxpayers who are companies, trustees and absentees. If the land owned by these taxpayers is below the exemption threshold, the land is exempt from land tax. Again, that is a very positive initiative. The act also provides two types of rebates of assessed land tax; a general rebate of 15 per cent of the tax assessed, which currently applies to all taxpayers; and a phasing-in rebate which applies to companies and trustees to alleviate the impact of the value of their land holdings being just over the exemption threshold of \$100,000. The bill amends the Land Tax Act 1915 to increase the exemption threshold for companies, trustees and absentees from \$100,000 to \$150,000—yet we hear it is a bad move. I cannot agree with members opposite. It is a positive move to increase the threshold from \$100,000 to \$150,000.

As a result of this change, approximately 7,816 taxpayers will no longer pay land tax, yet again we hear the National Party wanting to oppose such a positive step. This bill amends the Land Tax Act 1915 to alter the way in which the phasing-in rebate is calculated and also extends the phasing-in rebate for the first time to taxpayers who are absentees. This adjustment to the phasing-in rebate will mean that 4,152 taxpayers will pay less tax. Again, the National Party opposition is opposing this, while there are 4,152 taxpayers paying less tax, which I would say is a positive step.

Mr HORAN: I rise on a point of order. The minister keeps saying that we are opposing—

Mr CUMMINS: No, I am not a minister yet.

Mr HORAN: But we are not opposing that. I want to make this clear: we oppose the removal of the 15 per cent rebate to companies, trustees and absentee owners—nothing else. We oppose the removal of the 15 per cent rebate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr CUMMINS: The adjustment to the phasing-in rebate will mean that 4,152 taxpayers will pay less tax—and that is a positive, as I said. The amendments in this bill will take effect for the 2002-03 financial year and for later years. I will not touch on the budget, which I believe is a very positive budget, with record spending in my electorate. Realising that the Beattie Labor government has delivered goods for the Sunshine Coast, I commend this bill to the House.