



Speech by

Michael Choi

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

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SOUTHERN MORETON BAY ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT ENTITLEMENTS PROTECTION BILL

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (4.33 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands Development Entitlements Protection Bill 2004. The primary objective of this bill is to provide for special arrangements to ensure that the owners of land on the southern Moreton Bay islands can personally exercise their rights to develop houses on their land, notwithstanding the fact that changes are being made to the Integrated Planning Act 1997 which may affect those rights. Obviously those approvals are subject to engineering consideration and development requirements as set out in the Redland Shire Council current town planning scheme.

In the 1960s and 1970s the southern Moreton Bay islands were subdivided into 22,500 lots allowing for a potential population of 33,000 people. Many investors bought the land sight unseen. Many were unaware that some of the land contained environmentally sensitive wetlands, took in cliff faces and other environmental considerations. Concerns emerged regarding the services and infrastructure on the islands. The private holding of large numbers of properties with drainage problems made replanning of the islands extremely difficult. This has been an ongoing problem for many years between the owners of the properties as well as the Redland Shire Council.

I think the current state government and the Redland Shire Council inherited this problem of poorly planned, ill-conceived proposals and shonky popular deals of the day. So much so that between 1981 and 1983 nine people were put on trial on charges of conspiracy to defraud over the sale of the land. The trial ran for 322 days but was aborted when a juror became ill after two weeks of deliberations.

Not everyone is going to be 100 per cent pleased with this bill. Some would argue that there are already too many houses on the islands and therefore there should be no more development. Some would argue that the property rights of the owners are unreservedly protected and therefore they should have the unlimited right to develop their houses on the island. It is going to be very difficult to please everybody.

This bill provides special arrangements to owners of certain land on the islands to allow them to continue to exercise their development entitlements under the existing planning scheme and to construct their dwelling on their land. This bill applies to a development application for development that would not have required a development permit under the existing planning scheme. The applicants advise the council of their proposal to carry out development under the existing planning scheme.

It is important, given the environmental considerations and the need for additional infrastructure provisions for what will be a very substantial population, that the protection of the islands be balanced. The Redland Shire Council has developed a range of measures designed to achieve positive conservation outcomes on the islands. The impact of the plans for the islands therefore need to be as limited as possible and allow for as much planning certainty for the council and the emerging communities as is possible.

I believe overall the bill strikes a very fine balance in this unique situation between the competing considerations of landowners with a legitimate expectation that they can one day build a house on their own block of land and the need to provide additional infrastructure for a significant population in the future

as well as the need to limit the population where possible. The need to protect high conservation value areas and the need to take into account the environmentally sensitive Moreton Bay islands is paramount.

The honourable member for Warrego mentioned that it is a step in the right direction. I say to that member of this House that it is a big step in the right direction and far more than the National Party has ever done for the owners of the islands in the past. I commend this bill to the House.