



Speech by

Mike Horan

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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PRIVATE PROPERTY PROTECTION BILL; LAND ACQUISITION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (7.47 p.m.): The previous speaker has waxed lyrical with an esoteric lecture to us all, and he has totally missed the point of this bill and what it is all about. This bill is about treating people fairly. It is not about what we inherited from Prince Charles the 32nd or someone else. It is about what happens today and it is about people who work hard, who borrow money and who buy an asset in the realisation that they have freehold land. It might be the corner of a suburban block which they lose for a new highway or a railway line, or it might be a property that had certain potential and that potential has been taken away by vegetation management rules or other rules to do with water or other issues. It is about treating these people fairly. That is what it is about. It is about a young couple who might have a 40 per cent deposit to buy their land and build their house, or to buy their farm and work their farm. It is about a young couple working hard for their family, trying to raise their kids and having that great Australian hope and dream of some financial security.

I am sure that that is what all members of this parliament would like to see—that we have people endeavouring to better things for their children and family, endeavouring to make the land they work on or the house in which they live something that we as a nation would be proud of. Do they not deserve to be treated fairly if there is something imposed upon them that is for the national good or for the state good? If we impose upon them rules to leave more vegetation and deny them the activities that they lawfully and legally want to enter into to develop that place—in staged development, as they can afford it through their life—if that is taken away from them for the national good, then surely the national or state regimes should pay a part of the cost of that.

It is exactly the same if a person has a dream of a house in the suburbs. Suddenly the powers that be of the day say that a four-lane expressway will go through. That person's house does not lie in the middle of that proposed expressway; it is located on the edge of it somewhere. That person does not receive full compensation because that person has been dislocated, or a corner is taken out of that person's land, which reduces the value of that person's property. Should not that person be treated fairly?

I remember well when the South-East Freeway was first mooted. All members would probably agree now that that freeway is a great way to access suburbs such as Sunnybank and all the other suburbs in the south, and so on. But there were families who had lived in suburbs like Buranda for all of their lives. Suddenly they were going to be relocated. They had to move. Old ladies and widows had to move to another suburb in another part of Brisbane. They did not know anything else but living in Buranda where they could walk to their own particular shops, and so on. However, things change. People such as those people and people on the land—anyone who is affected by these major and necessary changes—should be treated properly and decently. That is what these two bills are about. These two bills are about things like an impact statement, like a proper scientific assessment of the detriment to the people who are losing their asset or certain abilities to do things on their asset. These bills treat people fairly all the way down the chain. They make them aware of the legislation going through the parliament that introduces the impact

statements and all the other things that affect these people so that they can be treated as decent human beings.

Let us not have some philosophical dream that everyone will live in a rented flat and no-one will own land because it all belongs to somebody else, or whatever. Let us be Australians and have true pride of ownership. People should know what they can use their land for—whether they want to build a house, have a hobby farm, a fishing lodge, a dairy farm or a grazing property. People should have some pride and some certainty. They should know that if a government is going to do something to them, then that government will treat them fairly as decent human beings and as Australians who have endeavoured to make a contribution to our society.

I saw the shame and disgrace that happened with Cubbie Station. Members opposite should hang their heads over what happened there in a political stunt. There are hardworking people out there—all sharefarmers or young couples on that property with 1,200 hectares each. I saw young families and mothers with babies on their hips. They had hire purchase loans on their John Deere tractors. They had their land and they knew what they could work. It was a cynical exercise to say that that whole Cubbie Station would be closed down to take water to the Narran Lakes. It was not true. The government could not take that water over three different river systems through about 80 kilometres of sand. So then the Premier came up with another idea that it was for national competition payments and that we would not get them if he did not shut down Cubbie Station. When he found out that that was not true at all, he then went into the salinity exercise and put out red maps and took photographs from other states and plastered Queensland with propaganda about that. Let us never have that dishonesty again. If ever anything has to be done in this state, let us do it straight down the middle. Let us do it with fact, not fiction. Let us do it with true science. Let us do it with true honesty and some respect for the people of Queensland.

Many people in this state are facing a very changed and different society. The families of this state who have fishing licences and fish for a living but also fish to provide food on the table for people in Queensland are under assault by all the various changes that have come in. A whole plethora of changes have come in and they have affected those people. Some of those people—and members on both sides of the House would have been to the various meetings up and down the coast about this issue—are absolutely distraught. Some of them are in their fifties or sixties and what was to perhaps be their superannuation has been cut in half. Others are young families trying to make a living with both the husband and wife doing the fishing and someone looking after the kids onshore. They are having their living and their business taken away from them without any compensation. They are all prepared—like the farmers and like the families who live in the suburbs—to do their responsible bit for society and for the environment and to have sustainable fishing, but they do not receive the respect of reasonable consultation and reasonable compensation in return for what they are giving up and the hurt that they will experience from doing something that is supposedly for the national good.

Recently, there was a protest meeting in Cairns. The people at that meeting said to me, 'We don't want the dole, we want to work. We get out there and we catch fish. The tourists and other people eat it for their dinner. We do something worth while. We like our jobs and we like what we do. We don't want the dole. We want to be able to continue with our jobs.' They are the sort of people who we have to start to respect. One of the basic foundations of Australia and one of the basic dreams and aspirations of people is to have a block of land. If young people grow up in Australia—whether they are in the city or the country—feeling that there is always this risk or this alienation that things can be taken off them without a proper scientific reason, without a proper national reason, without a proper impact study and without fair and reasonable compensation, then we are going down the wrong track in this parliament and we are letting down the good, decent people of our state.

The big issue that has brought about the property rights issue certainly has been vegetation management. If ever there was something that could have been done with the full cooperation of people, instead of just going in like a bulldozer for purely political reasons and wiping out people's futures, it was vegetation management. There are families out there who have bought properties and thought, 'In this generation we will do a certain amount of development. When the next generation of the family takes over or if we sell and someone else takes over, there will be more development. We can do it in a balanced way. We can leave the vegetation that we must leave. We can provide areas of cultivation. We can fence off the creeks. We can leave nature strips and corridors.' That is the modern way of farming and grazing just as the modern suburban developments in Brisbane are vastly different from the ones that used to be cleared. Still, no-one will buy a block of land in Brisbane that has a gum tree on it, because people want it cleared so that they can then put in their little rows of hedges and Italian vases and all the rest. People want to do their own thing on their own land and they do not want a tree that will fall on their roof in a storm.

Let us consider this bill. I ask members to read this bill and see that it is about treating people fairly. This bill is about giving some real respect to those hardworking Australians who believe that they can buy freehold or leasehold land, be it for farming, residential or recreational purpose, and that they can work hard to pay it off and if perchance something needs to be taken away from the activities that they have

every legal right to do on that land, if that is in the national interest, then they will be treated with honesty, fairness and respect.