



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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PROPERTY AGENTS AND MOTOR DEALERS (AUCTIONEERING PRACTICE) AMENDMENT BILL 2004

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (8.14 pm): I am very pleased to rise to speak on the Property Agents and Motor Dealers (Auctioneering Practice) Amendment Bill, and I am very pleased to support my colleague the member for Currumbin in bringing this very worthwhile bill before the House. The member is to be congratulated on the bill, and I certainly hope that she receives a better result than I did with my first private member's bill.

This is a bill that sees a need as it exists in this state and fixes it. It is a bill that takes provisions that are working in other states—Labor led states—yet are absent in this state and incorporates them into the way that auctions are conducted in Queensland. Yet when the member for Currumbin enthusiastically brings a bill forward and the word 'this' is transposed for 'these' and the word 'practice' is transposed for 'practices', I think it is very disappointing to see the minister saying that the member for Currumbin is confused and has poor research. It is a case of the minister playing the man and not the ball. This is not the minister I know. This bill must be passed by this House and supported by government members if they are serious about fairness in auctions and about maintaining the integrity of that process.

The bill does three very important things. First, the bill establishes a bidders record of all persons who wish to bid on a property. As the honourable member has pointed out on a number of occasions, there are so many more minor auctions where this sort of registration takes place—for instance at art auctions—yet for the most significant purchase that the ordinary Australian will make there is no registration in the auction process. This lack of registration can lead to practices that corrupt the process of an auction and can hurt innocent consumers.

There have been a number of stories about people who are dummy bidders, who are there simply to bump up the price of a property. This is unacceptable and inhibits the market from carrying on in its natural functional state. There are even stories out there of auctioneers at crowded auctions calling fictitious people or objects, pointing to trees for bids and accepting bids from people over the phone when the agent is not talking to anyone at all. This will stop that corruption.

Second, this bill restricts sellers' bids to one. This is yet another provision designed to ensure that the integrity of this process is upheld. All Queenslanders want is a process that is fair. The best way to make it fair is by making it as open and accountable as possible.

The third way that the bill does that is by making it an offence to engage in collusive practices. This is a fundamental of trade and commerce. We see provisions of this nature—relating to collusion—in acts at the federal level, including the Trade Practices Act and acts dealing with corporations and corporate governance. There are even a number of acts in Queensland to do with the sale of goods that contain collusion clauses. If these provisions are not supported it will be a sad indictment on the government.

As I have said, this bill is about providing a fair and open process for the purchasing of property in Queensland. Once again the Liberal Party has found where Queenslanders are missing out at the hands of this government and has attempted to fix it.

I mentioned the private member's bill I moved and how it received such little support in this place, most notably from the government. Here is an opportunity for the members opposite to stop not voting for bills because they come from Liberals but vote for them because it is for the good of Queensland.

This bill is about openness and accountability—something that is much talked about yet rarely seen from the government. I ask government members to throw their support behind this bill to put some actions behind those words. I commend the bill to the House.