



Speech by

**Steve Dickson**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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## **STATE DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr DICKSON** (Kawana—Lib) (5.39 pm): I rise to speak on the State Development and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2006. I come from local government and I can see a few major issues that this government is going to face if it pushes forward with this bill. One issue is that of removing appeal rights from everyday citizens. I see that as a major problem and I see that as probably helping the big end of town. I have faced many developers in my day who have always come forward and said, 'We would love to have appeal rights taken away so that we can move forward with our developments.' That is what I see occurring if we move forward with this bill today. I think it is going to cause pain for a lot of people in Queensland. If this legislation goes ahead and the Coordinator-General gets it wrong one day, which will happen—it does not matter what level of government or what business you are in you will get it wrong some time—who will pay? Will it be the state government, the local government, the financier or the developer? As sure as God made little apples, it will be the mums and dads who pay at the end of the day. That is where the money is derived from.

I think this bill is about having faith in this government. It is about giving this government a big stick and hoping that it will be fair and show good faith. It concerns me that the latest amendments have only just been put on our desks. That tells me something. When documents turn up at the end of business, that means that they are not prepared properly. It means that a lot of thought has gone into it but they have not quite got it right. My advice to this government is to take this legislation back and make sure that it gets it right before it brings the legislation forward. That is something we all should do. I know that things sometimes work out at the last minute but when changes are made at the last minute there is a tendency to get it wrong. I think that has been spoken about a few times today.

This bill removes the rights of everyday Queenslanders to appeal. If somebody comes forward with some type of development and they want to run over the top of people, as this government may do one day—it might buy land or take land off some people without giving them appeal rights—they can do so without those people having any right of appeal. I know this government would not want to be seen to be doing that, but things occur in life out of necessity. I think this government is trying to push forward on a piece of land around the Traveston Dam site. It is going to force a few people off their land. I am concerned that this law will be used against those people. I do not want to think that that would ever happen. I am sure this government would have more morals than that, but I would hate to see this legislation used for that purpose.

Under this legislation people will only be able to apply to the Supreme Court. It is quite expensive to go to the Supreme Court. Some people can afford to go there but not the average mum and dad, not the people who live in those houses at Traveston. They will not be able to afford to defend themselves. I am sure that this government would never go after the defenceless. It would prove itself way above that. I hear today that this government has spoken about public consultation and about going through the process. I can see the process being overridden today if this legislation is passed.

I do not believe this legislation is a good document. For the sake of local government I do not think it is going to be too happy with it either. The government may push it through today, but it will create a lot of problems for itself later down the track. There are many people out there who work in local government and they would like to see the government doing what I consider to be the right thing, which is taking this legislation back and making it a better document. There are some very good points in this legislation, but I believe that it is still flawed and it is flawed because of its timing. It has rushed this legislation through, and when things are rushed through you are going to get it wrong.

The number of Queenslanders who can be dislocated by this bill is immense, and this will come back to bite us all. I am saying this for the sake of everybody in parliament today. We do not sit here and listen to everything that is said, but I have been there and have experienced these things. I say to the government: do not get it wrong because it is not worth the trouble. It may be a matter of just six to eight weeks before the government could bring this legislation back. The government should spend a bit of time on it and think about what it is doing because the people of Queensland will be grateful to the government for that.

This government already has calling in powers. It can use those any time it likes on a major development it does not want to see go through or if it has problems with it or if local government expresses that it has a problem. Why put this legislation through in a hurry? The government can use its existing powers.

I have come to this state government from local government and I have seen a lot of positives and a lot of negatives. This state government has done a lot of good things and I have seen it do some things that are probably irrational or illogical on occasion. Other members will have seen that as well. There are some people in this House who have not made really good decisions.

In Kawana, this government decided it was going to build a hospital at Sippy Downs. I pulled out a lot of documents from the newspaper. That decision was somehow overridden. I do not know why the hospital is not going to be built there any more, but it was a good idea at the time. Even the Premier and the health minister thought so. But that is not happening: it was a mistake. And that is what I think this government is going to make with this bill here today: it is going to make a mistake. The people of Queensland will not appreciate that. They will not appreciate any of us. We all get tarred with the same brush when this government makes a mistake. I am asking the government to think about what it is doing because mistakes are easy to make but fixing them is really difficult.

This bill looks to me as though it is made for the mega rich. I have said that before. I do not want the people of Queensland to think that this government has put forward a bill that is just made for people who have a lot of money. Bills put forward should be acceptable to all the people of Queensland. They should be forthright bills. I do not think this is one of those. The government should take this one back to the drawing board, have a good look at it and bring it back when it has got it right. The government should not drop documents on our desk at the last moment. That is the major reason I am going to vote against this legislation today. I have not had the opportunity to read the amendments. I would like to have done that but time has not allowed me to. Labor members are aware of that as well. We are all aware of it here because they have only just turned up.

We have an honour bestowed upon us to do the right thing by the people of Queensland. I hear the rhetoric in here every day—I hear a lot of slurs as well—about how we all want to do good. I will commit that I am going to try to do good and that is what I am telling government members here today. They should give it a go—look at what they are voting for, look at the implications for the everyday Queenslanders and think about it when they go to vote because I think they will be voting the wrong way if they vote in favour of this legislation. They will get it wrong and I can absolutely guarantee them of that.