



Speech by

# Stuart Copeland

MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM

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## PROPERTY AGENTS AND MOTOR DEALERS AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

**Mr COPELAND** (Cunningham—NPA) (8.51 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the Property Agents and Motor Dealers and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2005 in the House tonight. The bill covers quite a wide-ranging area. To be honest, there is only one area that I particularly want to cover. The member for Callide covered in some detail the issue of setting reserve prices. I think there are some very real concerns about that in the bill. I look forward to hearing the minister's reply. That could be an issue particularly in rural areas in the way that that is set out. To be honest, I think it is up to the vendor to decide what reserve price is going to be set. As I said, the member for Callide has gone into detail on that.

Clause 4 of this bill provides for exemptions for charity auctions, whether it is celebrity auctioneers or the Magic Millions. This is the area on which I particularly want to concentrate my contribution tonight. As members of parliament are all aware, going to charity auctions can be a very dangerous occurrence—

**An honourable member:** And very expensive.

**Mr COPELAND:** And very expensive. It is something that we do because we want to support the charities. However, we can leave and find our wallet much lighter. I know this from my own experience. I was at an auction about 18 months ago. I put in a bid of \$50 for a painting. The next thing I knew was that it was a \$100 bid and I was walking away with it—and that was from a licensed auctioneer. There are certainly some dangers in it.

**Mr Shine** interjected.

**Mr COPELAND:** I point out to the member for Toowoomba North that you cannot do anything about it. I notice that he was not at that auction to support it, even though it was close to his electorate. I was there to support it and I bought the painting for \$100 because it was for a good cause.

**Mr Reynolds:** He is too lousy.

**Mr COPELAND:** I would not say that. I almost said that but I would not be drawn into that. It is very good to have an exemption for charity auctions. We all know that they are for a good cause. In many cases, it is not licensed auctioneers conducting those. In some cases there are. In this particular case there was, and he was not particularly moral in the way he was doing it. But that was okay; he was doing it for a good cause and we were all happy to participate. Likewise, it is good to be exempting the celebrity auctioneers. The member for Darling Downs said that he had been called on. I do not think he is a celebrity auctioneer and I do not think some of the other auctioneers are either, but it is for charity. All of us can understand that. I have been called on to auctioneer on a number of occasions and I always decline because I am an absolutely hopeless auctioneer. They would lose more money than they would gain if I was doing it. So I always try to do someone else in. The member for Callide, for example, is an excellent auctioneer and I know other members do that as well.

The area I want to concentrate on is the Magic Millions and the exemption that is granted to it. I was quite perplexed when I read the bill and saw that there was an exemption from the requirement for the

auctioneers at the Magic Millions to be licensed auctioneers. I note that the member for Yeerongpilly said earlier that the exemption is to allow international auctioneers to come and auctioneer. While I can see that point and I understand that there may be some occasion for international auctioneers to come over, I still think there may have been a better way to write the legislation. For example, it could have said, 'An auctioneer licensed in another jurisdiction may be exempt under certain circumstances.'

The Magic Millions is a very significant event not only in terms of being a significant racing and tourism industry event—as the explanatory notes state—but also in terms of the economic contribution to our state. That is particularly what I want to concentrate my speech on. As I have said on a number of occasions in this parliament, my electorate—and I guess Beaudesert may be the other—and the ones surrounding mine are probably the centre of the thoroughbred breeding industry in Queensland. The Magic Millions is a very important event to the vitality and prosperity of those thoroughbred breeding enterprises and of course the flow-on effects to the other industries that sit around that. We need to make sure that the Magic Millions is a successful event.

I was at the Magic Millions in January this year. I must pay tribute to Bill Millican and the committee of the Gold Coast Turf Club. I acknowledge the member for Southport, who is on that committee. It was a very successful event and I was very pleased to be able to be there to participate in that event. I had not been to the actual race for a few years until this year. I have certainly been to the sales previously. It must have been either the first or second Magic Millions event, which I think was around 20 years ago—and the minister might be able to correct me. So I was quite young when I went to that event. It was a packed event then and it is a packed event now. It is a great event for the Gold Coast and for Queensland. But, more importantly, it is a great event for the thoroughbred breeding industry in Queensland. We need to make sure that we do everything we can to continue that success but also to continue the probity, to continue to make sure it does the right thing. To be honest, I have to question why we are providing an exemption for the auctioneers who operate there. It is such a big industry. Big dollars change hands.

**Mrs Stuckey** interjected.

**Mr COPELAND:** The shadow minister tells me that \$100 million changes hands. There have to be very good reasons why there is an exemption for the auctioneers. I am not convinced that those reasons exist. We have good auctioneers in Queensland. We have top auctioneers in Queensland. If it comes to that, we should be using those auctioneers. Certainly, there may be occasions for charity events—

**Mrs Stuckey** interjected.

**Mr COPELAND:** The shadow minister reminds me that we have not needed them for 20 years. There are very good reasons why we should be licensing those auctioneers. An exemption for the Magic Millions is very questionable. In my own electorate and, I have to say, in the electorates surrounding me—and I will promote them just as vigorously—there are studs like Wattle Brae at Pilton. It is run by Gary and Phoebe Turkington and they had their most successful Magic Millions yet. It was a fantastic event for them. It was the highlight of their year and it has been the best Magic Millions that they have ever been to. The Eureka Stud, run by Scott and Grania McAlpine, had yet another good year. Eureka has been a longstanding stud on the Darling Downs and has been very successful. There is also Oaklands Stud, run by Neville Stewart, whom a lot of members of parliament would know. Unfortunately, his stud was touched by tragedy when Lion Hunter died a couple of years ago. It was one of the most promising sires in Australia. There is also Highgrove Stud, run by Ron Gilbert. That is in the electorate of the member for Darling Downs. Ron Gilbert has a small boutique stud but probably has the highest quality brood mares of any stud. Then there is Furlong Stud run by the Atkinsons. They are a very successful family in thoroughbred breeding in Queensland at Cambooya. The list goes on and on. These are very big and successful studs. The Magic Millions is an important part of their year and their prosperity.

Let us think of all the industries that hang off this one. On many occasions in this House I have spoken about country racing and the importance of the thoroughbred breeding industry to my electorate and to regional areas across Queensland. For example, Regimental Gal won the two-year-old race a couple of years ago. That horse is owned by some very close friends of mine from Toowoomba.

**An honourable member:** Did you back it?

**Mr COPELAND:** Unfortunately I did not back it. However, I saw the news that night and I will never forget the look on Adele Roberts' face. Adele and Frank Roberts were part-owners of Regimental Gal. On the news that night I saw Adele with her hat flapping in the wind as she led Regimental Gal. That has to be one of the great experiences of being a racehorse owner. It is extraordinary to think that they can own a million-dollar horse. Of course, Regimental Gal went on to bigger and better things.

I have a part interest in a racehorse that was bred at Wattle Brae Stud by Gary and Phoebe Turkington. Unfortunately, she did not quite qualify for the three-year-old race at the Magic Millions. She almost got there and we were hoping that she would. I am certain that if she had qualified she would have been very competitive.

This is something that we all aspire to. The Magic Millions provides horse owners with the opportunity to see if their horse could qualify for a million-dollar race, either the two-year-old race or the three-year-old race. It is a great thing for Queensland and we need to ensure that its success continues. I

question whether the exemption for the auctioneers at the Magic Millions is appropriate. We have great auctioneers in Queensland and we have never needed this before. In the early days Elders was associated with the auctions. It has been a real success and we do not want to be tampering with it.

With those few words, we support the majority of the bill. There are some areas that we have concerns about. The Magic Millions is a great event. I really enjoyed it this year and I look forward to going back next year.

**Ms Keech:** We look forward to welcoming you back to the Gold Coast.

**Mr COPELAND:** I thank the minister very much. I know that the studs in my electorate and surrounding electorates will continue to support it and will continue to breed fantastic horses that will win races throughout Australia and the world.