



Speech by

Barbara Stone

MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD

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URBAN LAND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BILL

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (12.42 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House and speak on the Urban Land Authority Development Bill. The bill will ensure that homeownership remains affordable for families within our growth corridors, something that is really important to the people of Springwood. It has specific strategies for housing affordability. It will see a better sequencing of release of land while not allowing developers to sidestep environmental laws, something else that the people of Springwood find very important.

The establishment of the Urban Land Authority is the centrepiece of the bill and, indeed, the state Labor government's Housing Affordability Strategy. It will be provided with powers to acquire and consolidate land suitable for new housing and ensure that it is moved quickly to the market. Five initial sites have been identified for the authority to undertake planning, management and delivery of strategic urban redevelopment sites. They are at Fitzgibbon, Northshore Hamilton, Bowen Hills, Woolloongabba and Mackay Showgrounds. The authority will have the power to require developers to include public and affordable housing on these designated sites. I am sure that everyone will be looking at these sites with great interest and I am also sure that the authority will provide the leadership that we require to have better urban planning and affordable housing outcomes.

It is expected that these sites will deliver housing for more than 20,000 Queenslanders. The authority has been developed after consultation with the industry and targets the issues they rate as barriers and problems in the development approvals process. The authority will ensure that planning and development applications are decided as quickly as possible. This will minimise the holding costs incurred by developers and that eventually is passed on to homebuyers. The new authority will have the power to deliver a range of housing styles to meet the changing needs of the community and can attach conditions of sale to require a component of affordable housing.

But what I am extremely pleased about is that it recognises the need for a range of housing options. In the past people have usually purchased first homes that were very small, did not have the extra bathrooms or the family rooms. Often if you were building, landscaping, pathways and fences were all an added cost that many of us could not afford. This allowed for people to enter the housing market. They added their extensions, landscaping, pathways or other features as years went by and as they could afford to do so. Some would sell and move into bigger houses as they had families and they were also financially able to do so. To me, having housing options is another way of providing opportunities for people to do just that.

A few months ago I heard one of the saddest comments ever made to me. It was from a young man in his early twenties in his first year of work. He is straight from uni in a professional job. He said to me that he and his friends all felt that the dream of owning their own home had gone. At his age I was purchasing a block of land and designing my first home that I was going to build. Never did I feel that I would never own my own home. That thought never crossed my mind. The thought that I would struggle, the thought that I would have to work hard to achieve this dream often did cross my mind, but I always knew I could do it. More importantly, I knew I could do it as a single woman. To hear those words was quite distressing to me.

But what are other young people saying? Some of them are saying to me that they are very happy to have purchased apartments, as this too can be the stepping stone for them to get their house and land. That was very similar to what some of my friends did when they first got married. They purchased what was called home units. Coorparoo was the suburb that most of my friends went to in those days to purchase those home units. They were very happy not to have the burden of mowing a yard or maintaining a house, just as young people have said that to me today about apartments. They were happy not to have a huge mansion and they wanted accessible public transport. I think this reflects exactly what young people of today want as well. They have said to me that they want accessible public transport, retail and recreational areas close by, they want sporting facilities close by and they want open spaces such as parks or town squares in retail centres. After all, they are living in an apartment block. They are living in a small living area and they want to be able to access that outdoor living and entertainment easily.

The second group that I have spoken to are usually young married couples who, while apartments might be okay, were actually looking for a small allotment with a modest home on it. Once again, they brought up that they wanted public transport, services, retail centres and sporting and recreational areas close by. They could have a small allotment with a normal size house on it with not as much yard maintenance but could still have nice parks and things close by so that they could go out and enjoy outdoor living as well. To me that is a happy compromise. They said they were happy to enter the market this way; then they would move on to something else as they moved through the different stages of their lives.

I find it incredible that we hear people stand in this House and say that they do not want high-density development. They do not understand that there is a need for a variety of housing. I have heard comments in relation to people not wanting the humble home that we purchased years ago. The new houses that I have seen in some of the new housing estates are actually the humble home of today's standard. They might not be the humble home that we think of, but on today's standards I think they can be quite a humble home. I have never lived on acreage, yet I understand why people would want to. I understand that we need larger allotments for people to choose to live on, but we also need housing choices for everyone else.

The people who best understand that seem to be the young and the seniors. Seniors understand the housing choices because they too want some choices as they go through their senior years. They understand the other choices because they want those choices for their grandchildren. Yes, there are still some who want the 32-perch block with the Hills Hoist in the backyard. Where did we get that years ago? 'In the outer suburbs, in the outskirts', I hear. The outskirts years ago was Springwood. The outskirts for my mother was Mount Gravatt—somewhere that would not be considered the outskirts today. So where are the young people going for this? They are going to the outskirts of today, just as we did. And just as we did, they want sensible planning and practical design; they need it to be suitable and they need housing in various forms for all stages of their lives.

For those people who say we should not let Brisbane, Logan or the Gold Coast grow, where do they want their kids to live? Do they want their kids to be close by? Do they want us to say, 'Sorry, kids, we've closed it all off. There's no more housing for you'? Where exactly do they want their kids to go? By offering a range of housing options, we are not only meeting the differing needs in our community but also offering opportunities for people to enter the housing market. The choice is very clear. We have to plan, we have to plan for sustainability and we have to ensure we keep the dream of homeownership alive.

It is often said that the empty vessel makes the most noise. The member for Moggill was making a lot of noise earlier in this debate, and I am not surprised. I looked at the Liberal Party's web site under its policies and, to my surprise, guess what I found? There was no housing policy. I have a list here of what I found, but there was no Liberal Party housing policy. Can I say that I did find out that the coalition would assist in tackling Ross River fever. I thought that might have been for those people that the coalition cannot assist to find a house. Perhaps those people are living in tents and the coalition will look after the mosquitoes for them. I also found on the web site 'services in the Chatsworth electorate'. I went and saw the Labor member for Chatsworth and we had a bit of a look at this. We decided not to go too far into it because we found that the web site was a bit out of date as it still had Lawrence Springborg as the leader. So I found no solutions there, nothing from that side.

I then wondered what the National Party had, and it was a little better. It had its state platform up there on the web site and it did include housing, but whether that will be put into a policy remains to be seen. Let us think back to when the National Party was in power. Let us turn back the clocks and think about that. If the Nationals were in power today, there would be no brake on urban development, no brake at all. Remember that it was the National Party that strongly promoted broadscale tree clearing policies that saw hundreds and thousands of hectares of remnant vegetation destroyed year after year statewide, yet National Party members stand in this place and talk about sustainability, sensible balanced planning and green space—that is something they have never, ever demonstrated. In other words, the opposition has no affordable housing policy, it has no alternatives. It is an empty vessel.

Mrs Sullivan: They have a policy. They rip money out of it.

Ms STONE: That is right, they do not put money into housing. It was not that long ago that Queenslanders were led to believe that under a coalition federal government interest rates would be kept low. Well, they have been lied to. I have lost count of the number of rate rises we have had. Maybe someone can inform me.

Mr Wallace: Nine.

Ms STONE: Thank you. What I have not lost sight of is knowing that for many households that extra \$50 per month—or whatever the figure is, but I know it is high—represents a significant chunk out of their budgets.

Mrs Reilly: Especially because their mortgages are so high now.

Ms STONE: Their mortgages and their fuel bills.

Mrs Reilly: And their food bills.

Ms STONE: Yes, their grocery bills. We can keep adding to that on and on; it just does not stop. So taking that big chunk out of their budget can make it even more difficult to get into homeownership. That is even more reason to have those choices for them as those stepping stones.

Today I will be joining the Springwood State High School leaders—Nick Batt, Joel Goode, Lauren Hughes and Samara Berger. They are our future generation leaders. I am going to have a great conversation with those young people over lunch. They are going to do a tour of Parliament House because one of these days one of them just might be sitting in here. One of the topics I will be asking them about is housing. I will be getting their views, because that is how we find out exactly what people want. It is not all about what we thought was the dream. It is not all about what our mothers and fathers thought was the dream. What do these young people want for housing for the future? They are also going to see a demonstration by the Travelsafe Committee on the report that was given this morning. I am looking forward to taking them through and having a great discussion with them.

Getting back to that distressing comment by that young man about never thinking he would own a home even though he is a professional and he has the capabilities to do that, I asked him about some things that he thought of. One of them was land release; he came up with that straight away and started to talk to me about that. He also talked to me about the option of small allotments or having villages with all those services in them, such as recreation facilities, retail facilities, medical services and other services that are needed. So I gave this plan to him and told him to have a look at it and it is exactly what he wanted. This is what he is looking for.

Mrs Reilly: He's a sensible young man.

Ms STONE: He is a very sensible young man. He lives in my area; that is sensible. He is very sensible. He pointed out to me that that is exactly what they were looking for. They were looking for those options.

The Deputy Premier has shown really strong leadership by bringing this bill into the House. The developers in my area often tell me how hard it is to get things done and to go through councils and to experience the barriers they have to deal with to get affordable housing and get housing sites going. I know that many of them have spoken to me about the charges and the park charges. They say that after they do these developments they wonder where the parks are because they certainly put in the money for them. This bill has certainly provided strong leadership for not only future homeowners but also developers.

Affordable housing is certainly the issue of the day. I know at seniors clubs it is the No. 1 issue they speak to me about, because once again they are worried about WorkChoices and they are worried about their kids not having a job to buy a home. That is their major concern in life. They are also worried about the environment. They are worried that their kids will not have the nice bushland and green spaces that we enjoyed and that they enjoyed around their suburbs. They too want to see sensible planning outcomes for affordable housing for their grandchildren. I think those seniors have it right. Like I said before, they have it right because they know we do need an option and we do need choices for housing for people.

Owning your own home in Australia has always been the great dream, but it has always been the great dream that many of us achieve because we go out there and we work hard to achieve it. But there are some people who do not have the skills and are not fortunate enough to have the education that many in this place have. They are certainly behind the eight ball when it comes to getting housing. With WorkChoices and so forth now, they certainly do not have the job security that we did. That is one of the barriers for young people getting a house. They do not have the security in the workplace that we had. Many of them are put on temporary contracts or put on as casuals. They come to me all the time and tell me that they cannot get bank loans because of that fact. Unfortunately today, that is the market. The banks have to recognise that these people do need to be looked after in the housing market because that is the labour market of today. I am hoping that will change very shortly when we get the Rudd Labor government in power.

A government member: Kevin07.

Ms STONE: That is correct. Once again I want to thank the Deputy Premier for providing strong leadership by bringing this bill to the House. She has ensured that the dream of owning your own home stays alive for everybody in our state. It will stay within the reach of ordinary Queenslanders. With those words, I thank her and I commend the bill to the House.