



Speech by

Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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URBAN LAND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BILL

Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—Lib) (11.44 am): When debate on the Urban Land Development Authority Bill was adjourned yesterday afternoon at 5.30, I was talking about proposed section 106 of the bill. Before I proceed with that, I wish to firstly acknowledge the unemployment figure that was provided by the Deputy Premier today. We have an unemployment rate of 3.5 per cent, and what a great figure that is. I also wish to acknowledge the great work that has been done by the Howard government in setting up the environment so that the state of Queensland can take full advantage of the economic boom times that have been provided by the federal coalition government over the last 10 years.

I also want to reflect on something else the Deputy Premier said during question time when she talked about who was going to be the friend of the working man in Queensland. She talked about wages and how much people are being paid. I remind the Deputy Premier that under the last 10 years of the federal coalition the average take-home pay for working people in Australia went up by 20 per cent, while in the prior 15 years the average wage under the Labor government went backwards.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): I remind the member for Clayfield that we are speaking on the Urban Land Development Authority Bill.

Mr NICHOLLS: Indeed, and I do take your direction there, Mr Deputy Speaker. We were talking about housing affordability and nothing could be more important to housing affordability than having a job and a higher income to pay for it. So I think it is always important to remember that, when it comes to wages in Australia, the best friend of the working man is the Howard-led Liberal-National coalition, which increased workers' real take-home wages by 20 per cent, not decreased them like the Hawke-Keating failed government did in the prior 10 or 15 years.

I read out proposed section 106 yesterday. It sets out the qualifications for those people who will be appointed to the Urban Land Development Authority. It sets out a number of qualifications in six areas, including architecture, urban design, social policy, local government and others. But proposed section 106(1)(b) has, as I called it, the Labor mates' appointment clause, because it says 'has other knowledge and experience the Governor in Council considers appropriate'—that is, the Governor in Council with the advice of the Executive Council. So this would allow for the appointment of union hacks, failed members and other flotsam and jetsam of the Labor Party if the minister thinks they need a job.

That is why it is essential that the process for the appointment of members to the authority allows for at least some independence from executive government. We all remember what happened when Steve Bracks of the Tattersalls advisory fame attempted to appoint the former chief of staff of Labor Lord Mayor Jim Soorley to the board of the Victorian Urban Land Authority and the furore that caused. The Treasurer is under an obligation to give an ironclad guarantee that Labor mates will not be appointed to the ULDA. If she cannot or will not give that guarantee, then the government is again condemned for its inability to act in the best interests of Queenslanders, as opposed to acting in the best interests of itself and its union mates.

There are many other issues in relation to the legislation. In proposed section 3(2)(e), there is a reference to 'low to moderate income households', but there is no definition of 'low to moderate income households'. The question to be asked is: is the definition to be left to the government, or is it in fact the

ULDA which would determine who is in a low to moderate income household? Is there some other industry standard that would be used?

In the development principle set out in proposed section 3(3), the definition of 'range of housing options' effectively means anything goes, so in developing a range of housing options the authority is not constrained and nor is the minister. There is no reference to existing needs or desires or wants and nor is there any reference to existing developed plans for neighbourhoods and areas.

Developing neighbourhood plans is not something that can be done lightly or easily, as recent experience in the Brisbane City Council neighbourhood planning process shows. They take a long time, they involve a lot of community involvement and unless the community comes along there will be a great sense of unhappiness and unease with any plans that are imposed from above.

In my electorate where there is one site—the Hamilton Northshore—the initial proposal by the Port of Brisbane Authority included a 30-storey tower which was completely and utterly unacceptable. Until that matter was raised and some political pressure was brought to bear and the community spoke, that program was still proceeding ahead. Traffic on Kingsford Smith Drive some two years after the proposal was initially put forward is still not resolved. In my area in Albion, there was another proposal for a TOD which provided a mix of housing styles and I strongly supported that. Unfortunately, it was actively opposed by the local Labor candidate at the by-election that was held last year. It was actively and is still actively opposed in the planning process.

There is, in fact, quite a number of good reasons why support for legislation like this—proper legislation with amendments, with changes—should go through, because it overcomes that particular issue. But it needs a lot of community consultation—consultation such as that put in place by the BCC in its neighbourhood planning areas. In West End there was a lot of opposition to the proposals to increase density, in the Deputy Premier's own electorate. She well knows the problems encountered as we tried to deal with the reuse of brownfields sites in that part of the world.

Time does not permit me to go through other issues which will be raised by other speakers. There are issues with the question of the urban development area, which in the terms of proposed section 7(1) is not defined. It can be declared at the whim of the government. Any part of the state may be declared as an urban development area. Proposed section 9(2) allows a regulation to make a new land use plan for an urban development area following the expiry of an interim land use plan. There is no statement as to how long that new land use plan is valid for. There are other issues in relation to IPA and other things, but in general I support the bill with amendments.

Time expired.