



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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MANUFACTURED HOMES (RESIDENTIAL PARKS) AMENDMENT BILL

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (9.02 pm): Affordable housing means having housing options. Manufactured home parks used to provide one alternative for people seeking a less expensive option than freehold property. They loved their manufactured homes, whether flash or humble, which were located upon a leased block of land. They had neighbours nearby and they understood community. I am talking in the past tense because this is becoming a past life for many people who love their homes but who are being forced out. Unfortunately, this legislation will not stop that problem. With the SEQ Regional Plan there are winners and there are victims. I advise the parliament that people living in manufactured home parks are victims, as the value of land within the urban footprint has made many of those parks even more valuable for redevelopment, although not as manufactured home parks. They are fast being lost, along with other caravan parks, from within the SEQ regional footprint. They are being squeezed out as properties within the urban perimeter become unaffordable.

I fear that this legislation fails to provide the protection that the owners of manufactured homes are seeking, because at the end of the day if the park owner decides to close down and redevelop and the homeowner has to relocate, there may not be anywhere to go within 100 kilometres. Certainly I face that situation in my electorate. I have constituents whose parks are being closed or progressively closed but they have nowhere to go. There are no alternatives within 100 kilometres. I have raised this issue with the minister and I hear other members of the parliament raising the issue. While I appreciate the attempt to put protections into the act, unless that power balance is addressed by providing alternative sites that people can move their homes to, they will still be left up the creek without the proverbial paddle.

I suggest that, in addition to this legislation, we need provisions within the SEQ plan and planning procedures that provide incentives for the maintenance of caravan parks and manufactured home parks, because currently they are being priced out of the market, they are being upscaled and redeveloped, and people are losing their opportunities. One hundred kilometres is a long way for someone to move a manufactured home. I know that there is talk of compensation for people who move within 300 kilometres, but the reality is that most people who want to stay within the community where their friends and family live will not want to move more than 20 or 30 kilometres away, and certainly will not want to move 100 kilometres away. One hundred kilometres is a long way away from friends and family.

In Queensland, as you go further north building regulations change, as properties have to be cyclone proof. There is an historic issue that it may be harder to bring older relocatable homes up to current building standards. Whatever way we look at it, there are a lot of problems associated with relocating what were completely relocatable homes when first established, but today's higher standards mean that options are a lot more limited. I fear that the very specific issue of land supply will mean that in South-East Queensland manufactured home parks will close down because of the pressures of growth. However, we will also see caravan parks that provide tourism opportunities becoming a thing of the past. I think that is a great shame in the state of Queensland.

When we talk about people being squeezed out, we must remember that we are talking about real lives. We are talking about real people who are affected. I have raised some cases with the minister

previously and I will mention one here in the parliament. Some of the cases that individual park homeowners have faced have been most unreasonable. A constituent of mine was ordered by the tribunal to be gone by a certain date with no accompanying order for relocation costs. The order to determine the relocation costs was made only three days before they were supposed to have picked up their whole home and relocated to who knows where. That was a completely unreasonable situation caused by the tribunal's processes.

I have drawn that case to the minister's attention, but I will outline it for the benefit of the parliament. Initially, on 6 May 2010 my constituent was ordered by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal to be gone from their site by 18 June 2010. They attended another hearing three days before they were due to be gone, which gave them a bit of a stay of execution. In summary, they were ordered to be gone by a certain date, with no order given at that time as to their relocation costs. The tribunal made the compensation order only three days before they were supposed to have packed up and moved out. There are examples where not only can the practice of some park owners be unacceptable but, as in this case, the tribunal can also fail in its consideration of the impact upon people. My constituents were very distressed because they did not even know what they were entitled to with the relocation and even if they received a compensation package they had nowhere to go. They were left in a very vulnerable situation.

There are some people who choose this way of life. It does provide an affordable housing option, or it has in the past, but we are finding that they are increasingly vulnerable. I will continue to raise the issue that more needs to be done within the planning laws of this state, the South East Queensland Regional Plan, to truly encourage a range of housing options, not just those that are going to be so up-market that people who had previously chosen these options will have no option. They will not be able to afford to live in South-East Queensland. In fact, they will not be able to relocate their home outside of South-East Queensland either, because they simply will not be able to afford to. This issue is not going to go away. We believe that it needs to be firmly addressed. I note that the minister has advised in correspondence to me that the government is considering this matter. I add my voice to those who have spoken about the vulnerability of this group of constituents because they still have nowhere to go. Unfortunately, the legislation before us still does not address the issue that they are facing.