




Speech By
Michael Berkman

MEMBER FOR MAIWAR

Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Maiwar Electorate, Mount Coot-tha Zipline

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (7.18 pm): I rise tonight to celebrate a major win for my community. On 11 April we learned that Brisbane's new Lord Mayor would bow to pressure and scrap council's short-sighted plan to turn Mount Coot-tha into a zipline adventure precinct. Earlier today, this was made official in the Planning and Environment Court. I could not be prouder of my local community.

I have been fighting against this proposal for more than a year. For many residents, having a local member willing to stand alongside them and organise forums and rallies, coordinate submissions and actively campaign with them was a first. This win belongs to so many people in my electorate and beyond. It belongs to every single person who hosted a fence sign, signed a petition, volunteered their time to campaign against the project, spoke to a neighbour, wrote to a politician, made a submission or attended any one of the events.

There are dozens of residents who deserve to be singled out for their tireless efforts. Every member, organiser and supporter of the Mount Coot-tha Protection Alliance deserves credit and sincere thanks for their ongoing work. I cannot name them all; they know who they are. I do have to single out Di Glynn, Bron Raftery and Peter Hale, who worked very closely with my office and who deserve a huge congratulations.

Privatising one of Brisbane's most loved and treasured green spaces was always a terrible idea. The proposal was ill-conceived, had no sensible business case and underestimated its impact on the local environment and the community. Worst of all, no-one asked the people of Brisbane whether they wanted it. Former Lord Mayor Quirk claimed the 2016 BCC election as a mandate but never actually asked anyone what they wanted, despite the land being held in trust for the people of Brisbane. When residents raised the alarm, the LNP council used every trick in the book to suppress public comment and avoid scrutiny. The so-called consultation was short and shoddy and never gave locals an opportunity to have their questions answered or their concerns meaningfully addressed.

When an unprecedented 3,600 residents made submissions on the project, the then lord mayor said that it was irrelevant how many people were in opposition to it. The whole ordeal was disgraceful. However, this is a common story. Our planning system allows this kind of disdain for residents and shuts communities out every day. Residents with concerns and questions are told to leave it to the experts as if they, the people actually living and working within the community, have no insight or valuable perspective to offer. We are seeing it across the western suburbs and throughout the state. That is exactly why I have called for a review of the planning system.

It is also why this victory is important. It proves that people power works even when coming up against a broken system. In fact, when stacked against governments and big business, it is the only thing that does. We were told from the beginning that this project was a done deal, that the BCC had

already spent hundreds of thousands of dollars promoting ziplines, as if it had already been built. We were told again and again that we did not stand a chance of stopping it. This should serve as an important reminder to activists and concerned citizens across our state: never let them tell you that it cannot be done.

Now is the time for deep, meaningful consultation about how we protect Mount Coot-tha into the future. I am so proud of my local community and look forward to working with them all to ensure—

(Time expired)