




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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HOUSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (2.32 pm): I, too, rise to talk about the housing legislation. Before I get into that, I want to comment on the earlier Greens contribution. If we all lived in the nirvana that they live in, there would be no rental properties left.

An honourable member: Correct.

Mr HART: I take that interjection. Everybody would be living in public housing, which is probably what the Greens would like to see happen. After all, if people rely on governments for housing, that would be something that they would really appreciate. We have to admire the nerve of the Greens in coming in here with this nirvana that they live in.

We do have a rental crisis at the moment. There are a number of reasons for that rental crisis. It is important for people to declare that they are landlords. I am not a landlord, so I will not be so declaring. It is important to recognise that a lack of confidence in the ownership of rental properties does more harm than good. I am glad that the government has not gone as far with this bill as it originally intended. A couple of years ago, they were talking about rental reform and about far more extreme measures than we see today. After a campaign run by the LNP and the Real Estate Institute of Queensland, the majority of those extreme reforms that were proposed have been removed as part of this bill.

We all admit that there are bad renters and bad landlords. We know that there are issues in this respect. We do need some changes to rental laws. I want to talk about some of the things that I do not agree with in this bill. I do not agree that people should have a unilateral right to have animals in their properties and I do not agree with the elimination of periodic agreements, because I think that will lead to a whole lot of unintended consequences.

This government continually brings bills to this House but has to return later to fix them. In terms of the elimination of periodic agreements, the REIQ made a very succinct statement—

The Bill is proposing to give tenants a unilateral right to remain in the tenanted premises for as long as they wish.

When these more severe rental reforms were going through, as the shadow minister for housing at the time I spoke to a lot of renters. A lot of renters gave me the impression they would be leaving the landlord market. A lot of landlords would be selling their rental properties because they did not want anyone telling them what they could or could not do with their properties. After all, they own them, have mortgages on them, control them and should have the right to decide who lives there and under what conditions.

I also want to talk about proposed retirement villages changes. This is a prime example of this government getting things wrong. It is not like they were not warned about it. In 2017 when the original bill around the buyback situation came to fruition, the LNP supported that. They were sensible laws, but in 2019 when the government went back and tried to fix something it had apparently made a mistake with—bringing freehold properties into the same condition—we warned very succinctly that there would be issues. I will table a press release that I put out at the time which warned of that.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 4 April 2019, by the member for Burleigh, Mr Michael Hart MP, relating to the Retirement Villages Act [1736](#).

The press release states—

The changes made to the Retirement Village Act have no place in the Health Bill—
to start with they were in the middle of a health bill—

The Palaszczuk Labor Government is out of touch and doesn't understand the damage these changes will cause to freehold retirement villages operated by residents.

That is what this is all about. Further—

Labor failed to get the previous bill right in 2017 and the minister should have realised that a freehold title sale process does not involve an exit entitlement.

That is what the original bill was about—an exit entitlement. People who have freehold title to their property do not have an exit entitlement. That was never going to work. The press release continues—

The LNP is concerned these villages may be forced to close or remove themselves from the protection of the Retirement Villages Act under Labor's changes.

That is exactly what the Labor Party did. They said to these retirement villages, 'Go to QCAT and get an extension of the 18 months allowed under this legislation.' By the way, that legislation was retrospective to 2017, so it kicked in a couple of months after this bill passed the House. A couple of months later, people were forced to buy back these properties. At the time, we warned very clearly that some of these properties would close or declare themselves no longer retirement villages. Members, what happened? Exactly that—villages closed. There was a village at Tin Can Bay that I mentioned specifically in parliament at that time. It was originally started by a doctor and his wife. It was their philanthropic exercise in starting a retirement village—because there was not a retirement village in Tin Can Bay, so they started one up—but they were caught out by this legislation. Then the doctor passed away and his wife was running that particular facility. She was forced to sell her house in order to comply with the buyback legislation.

She sold her house and ended up moving into that property. I spoke to her and her son a number of times. She was in tears on the phone, 'How am I going to buy back these properties as the government is forcing me to do? It will cost me money to go to QCAT.' That process does not work. Quite frankly, at the end of the day she closed the village. Those people no longer have access to that retirement village in Tin Can Bay. That happened at a number of facilities around Queensland. I table some media reports about those particular villages closing.

Tabled paper: Bundle of newspaper articles relating to retirement villages [1737](#).

The original legislation required a review within two years, so the government decided it would do a review on this in 2020. The interim report to the minister in relation to the impact of time frames for the mandatory purchase of units in resident operated retirement villages is dated September 2020, and a redacted version—to preserve privacy, apparently—was released to key stakeholders, including the resident operated retirement villages, in February 2021. It was not released to the opposition. Apparently we are not stakeholders in this whole process. I ask the minister to table the report so we can all read it. After all, we each represent approximately 36,000 constituents in our electorates. They want to know what is in that report.

What did the report basically say? It basically said that this does not work. We told the government that in 2019. We told them that villages would close. We told them that other villages would remove themselves from the Retirement Villages Act. That is exactly what happened. The problem with this government is that they do not listen to anybody but their arrogant selves. They do not listen to anybody. That is exactly the problem. This has become a dictatorship, where the Premier thinks she can just decide whatever she wants and the parliament goes completely out the window at the end of the day.

I have said it in this House before: why are members of parliament in this House if the government is not going to listen to us at the end of the day? They are not going to take input from people who have been landlords, people who have had rental properties, people who have been in business, people who actually know what they are talking about and have not just been some sort of union rep their whole life—people who have lived in the real world. They will not listen to them. Then a year or two down the track we are back here fixing the problems created by the Labor Party in Queensland to the detriment of the people of Queensland. Meanwhile, people have lost their livelihoods, they have had banks foreclose on them and they are out of work. Also as part of this bill we saw people out of retirement villages. Is that the result this government wanted to achieve? I doubt it, but they made the mistake and we are here today to fix it.