




Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 24 May 2022

STATE PENALTIES ENFORCEMENT (MODERNISATION) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (3.36 pm): The main objective of the bill is to give legislative effect to the integration of fine administration functions undertaken by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Public Service into the Queensland Revenue Office. These functions relate to camera detected offences such as not stopping at a red light, speeding and tolling offences. Some fine administrative functions have already been integrated into QRO. Other fine administration functions relating to mobile phone and seatbelt camera detected offences will be integrated from later this year. The bill also amends a number of other acts to give legislative effect to the integration of functions. The amendments will generally commence on 1 July 2022 to ensure an orderly transition from the current arrangements, while amendments relating to mobile phone and seatbelt camera detected offences will commence later this year.

I turn now to the parts of the bill regarding the Residential Tenancies Authority which the opposition are keen to speak on. The RTA, as has been mentioned, currently relies on investment returns on tenants' rental bonds to meet its operating expenses. The amendments proposed to the RTA will mean the RTA no longer needs to rely on volatile investment markets to fund its operations. The amendments will provide for a stable and reliable funding approach of annual grant funding from the Consolidated Fund. This is a sensible and cautious measure. I am confused as to why those opposite are opposed to it. It seems the LNP would prefer the RTA to play the market and risk tenants' bonds in an ever-changing global economy, rather than have the funds guaranteed by the backing of consolidated revenue. Maybe those opposite would prefer us to invest the bond money of Queenslanders into cryptocurrencies and NFTs or some other thing that they think they have an inside track on.

The member for Toowoomba South perhaps fancies himself as a bit of a wolf of Wall Street. He is probably a bit more of a wombat of West Street. We heard the member for Mermaid Beach speak on this bill with a bit of a brain dump of words that were certainly put together in sentences but did not make sense in the way he structured them. As much as those opposite would like to try to find something to criticise, this reform will ensure the RTA is able to continue to deliver essential services and support the rental sector, without being concerned about the impact of volatile investment markets. The RTA is very good at what they do, but we would not go to the RTA—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Please take a seat, member for Aspley. Member for Coomera, your interjections are not being taken. If I have to refer to you again, it will be a warning.

Mr MELLISH: We would not go to the RTA if we wanted to play the stock market, just as we would not go to the member for Coomera for financial advice—nor should tenants be forced to. There will be no impact on the authority's operations, powers or core functions and no jobs will be lost due to the reforms. The changes will not impact renters or landlords. There will be no change to the way renters and landlords interact with the authority, with all services, including those relating to the payment, redemption and holding of rental bonds, remaining unchanged.

The Treasurer outlined in his second reading speech that he has written to the shadow Treasurer to explain that this will have no effect on the balance sheet of the state, yet those opposite continue to pursue this half-baked argument. The RTA will continue to show the value of bonds as an asset which will now be held as cash in a bank account rather than in investments, and the value of the bond liability will remain on the balance sheet.

We heard about how the LNP's only plan for SPER was to privatise the debt and privatise everything—let the market sort it out. It will cost taxpayers double, but that is fine as long as it is off their balance sheet. They are the party of debt and deficit. They never got a surplus in Queensland. They never got one in nine years in Canberra. They claimed they were back in black. They printed the T-shirts. They printed the mugs. They did not get there. Now the former treasurer is out there looking for a new job.