




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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BUILDING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (11.48 am): I rise to speak on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill was referred to the Transport and Resources Committee so ably chaired by the member for Kurwongbah. Many have falsely said that he is the best chair of committees, but I will leave that alone. Very few have mentioned the erstwhile deputy chair. In fact, none of the members have come forward and said he is the best deputy of this chamber—and neither do I.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr POWER: I am not taking your interjection, but you agree that Lachie Millar is not the greatest deputy chair. I note that we have students here from Saint Thomas More Primary School. As we saw on the weekend with the election result, our young people are passionately interested in the transition of our energy systems to clean, environmentally friendly, renewable energy. I know that the minister is a passionate advocate for that as well.

I refer in particular to a provision identified as ‘ban the banners’ where local bodies corporate or developers have—I think irrationally and unreasonably—restricted the location of solar panels. Those restrictions can be really unreasonable, impractical and against our collective goal—although when I say ‘collective’, I mean those of us on this side of the House—to change Queensland’s energy system to make it more efficient and renewable, enhancing our goal to get to net zero emissions.

One of the most important contributions towards that goal is the installation of solar panels. However, some developers or bodies corporate have put caveats on homeowners that stop them from installing solar panels with the most efficient orientation, that is, facing towards the sun. Depending on the angle of the roof, it will be facing north, east or west—but mostly north. Homeowners have been forced to install solar panels so that they do not affect the street appeal of the house because the developer or body corporate had what I want call a nimby-eyed or a ‘not in my backyard’—or, in this case, ‘not in my front yard’—view of street appeal. Personally, I think solar panels or solar hot-water systems are beautiful because they contribute towards our clean green energy future. They are a part of the energy plan that we have going forward. This legislation will make it absolutely clear that we are committed to the efficient use of solar systems.

I note that not all developers take this approach. We are not in any way attempting to target developers or those with apartment blocks who are making a big contribution in this space. For instance, in my own area, in Yarrabilba the developer gave homeowners an extra \$1,000 to install solar panels on their roofs. While that was for a limited group of people, it showed the commitment, the support and the positivity of that developer towards solar energy. I know that in Logan there are huge numbers of solar installations because the people want to do the right thing to support our new energy systems and they are passionate about cheaper bills, which is vitally important. I recognise in the House that the ‘ban the banners’ policy targets those who are making irrational and unfair bans on homeowners. That is something that this government is very passionate about. We want to make sure that people can install solar systems on the north side of their roofs, which is something that I am looking forward to doing.

The one thing that concerns me most about this nimbyism and other irrational attacks is the involvement of the Greens. We have seen Bob Brown campaign against fantastic windmills that can generate power for his home state, Victoria and other places. He campaigned against them. We know that there are trade-offs with these things, but they are so nimby-eyed that they attack the very energy sources that are vital to our future. The Greens are anti-future energy. We are really disappointed that there is such a nimby-eyed attitude to this. The Greens are totally against renewable energy. Whenever they get the chance, they will attack all of the things we want to do to get to a net zero emissions future.

The Greens are so nimby-eyed that they are against all of the positive things that could be achieved with housing. They are against housing developments being located near transport routes, near jobs and near services. They want to push people further and further into the outer suburbs, which will mean greater energy consumption. They are against the necessary trade-offs we have to make to build housing near jobs and transport. As someone who represents outer suburbs, I look with regret at their nimby-eyed attitudes. They are anti the generation of energy through windmills. They are anti the construction of housing in places such as West End, which has really good connections to transport and jobs. Their nimby-eyed attitudes hold them back, just as the 'ban the banners' developers have been holding back reasonable homeowners from doing the right thing for the environment and to reduce their power bills through the efficient installation of solar panels and solar hot-water systems.

The amendments in the bill provide homeowners with certainty that they cannot be pushed back by developers and bodies corporate. The bill also gives certainty to solar installers about where solar panels and hot-water systems can be installed so that they do not have to second-guess after the planning has been done. This is about empowering the homeowner to install solar infrastructure at the preferred location on their roof.

I note the Minister for Education is in the House. She has done a fantastic job in putting air conditioning into our schools through the Cooler Cleaner Schools program. The department is also installing solar panels at our schools. When facing north or the most efficient orientation, solar panels are perfectly aligned with the use of electricity in schools. The Minister for Education absolutely knows how important the orientation of solar panels are because they are being installed at our schools as we speak. I recognise the fantastic investment we are making in our schools to reduce powers bills and to transition to a net zero emissions future. These amendments are vital so that homeowners can also do that with certainty.

It is really important to note how these amendments will affect someone who has been prohibited from placing solar installations at their preferred location. The bill will provide relief for any homeowner who has been prevented from installing solar panels or a solar hot-water system in their preferred location since 1 January 2010, regardless of the unfair caveats a developer may have made on the grounds of aesthetics. As I said, I think solar panels are hugely attractive because they show that the homeowner not only wants to have cheaper power bills but also wants to make a contribution towards Queensland's goal of net zero emissions. Therefore, a court order enforcing an inhibition will cease to have effect on the commencement of these provisions. As the minister has said, this is about empowering the homeowner to make a difference. If a developer has withheld consent to install a solar system in the homeowner's preferred location, the developer must reconsider giving consent if the homeowner requests it.

I ask developers to be reasonable. As I said, the developer of Yarrabilba, Lendlease, offered people \$1,000 for solar installations. Lendlease is not a small developer, but they recognise that, when people drive into a development such as Yarrabilba and see solar panels on the roofs, they know that it is a community that is really committed to changing our energy systems. I commend the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to the House.