




Speech By  
**Christopher Whiting**

**MEMBER FOR BANCROFT**

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### **PROPERTY LAW BILL**

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (4.38 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill before the House. As many have said, it is important that this bill replaces the 1974 act. It has done well; it has served the state well and so it is time for it to be updated. One of the things I really like about this bill is it makes changes or improvements to an act that affects all Queenslanders. This act, more than just about any other act, impacts Queenslanders' lives. It is probably one of the only acts that normal Queenslanders besides us would actually read and take a look at. I think it is absolutely important that this bill makes sure the act is in plain English. It is essential that these provisions can be easily understood by every Queenslanders.

I also commend the process in terms of how we got here with the Property Law Bill. We have heard that from 2013 to 2018 the QUT Commercial and Property Law Research Centre did research. It produced 18 papers—that is enormous—and 232 recommendations. It conducted a decade's worth of consultation. We have heard the LNP criticise us for taking some time to get to this point. When we had 18 papers making 232 recommendations on an act that is a fundamental part of our legal system and the everyday lives of Queenslanders, it is absolutely crucial that we get this right. I am happy with where we have arrived at today.

I will talk briefly about the issue of natural hazard disclosure. I had always thought that a mandatory disclosure system was a pretty good idea. I thought that when I was a councillor. What I also discovered as a councillor is that there are different standards of information on flood hazards held by councils across the state. If we made it a mandatory system I would be concerned that residents across Queensland would be paying for a service and expecting a standard of research and information that is the same and that could not be delivered given the different levels of research and information on flood hazards held by local governments.

I will give members one example. In the first term of the Moreton Bay regional council there was an excellent level of research and information produced by their flooding study. It showed exactly where the hazards would be. I know that was in stark contrast to some other councils that had a very different standard. I would constantly refer people to the mapping and say, 'If you're thinking of moving into the area, have a look at this mapping.' I believe that the research that went into this mapping was funded by the state government at the time. The member for Gympie was saying that this should be funded by the state. I know that the Moreton Bay regional council talked to the state government about getting funding to produce the mapping at that time.

In talking about natural hazards and recognising natural hazards and the impact of climate change, can I reiterate what the member for Mount Ommaney talked about, which was the huge beneficial impact of the world-leading Resilient Homes Fund that we introduced. When talking about natural hazards, this is something that we need to be talking about all the time. This fund has had a beneficial impact in my area. It has changed people's lives.

I have seen major floods come through Major Street in my area. Members have heard me say before that since my first elected position in 2000 I have seen three one-in-1,000-year rain events come through our area. I have seen two of those impact Major Street. We have had 1½ metres of water racing through the whole street and racing through people's houses. I have seen people sell up and new people move in. Those people get flooded as well and they say to me, 'I did not know it flooded here. They did not tell me. I only found out after I moved in.'

It is very clear when talking about flooding and natural hazards that something had to change. I commend the Labor government on bringing in this fund to help people make a change and get a new start in life. One gentleman I talked to in a street around that area—and who has since moved out because his home has been bought back—was paying \$27,000 a year in insurance to live in his home. He had had eight floods through his home. Approvals had only been given 20 or 30 years before. That was before we really saw the impacts of climate change.

It is important that we emphasise to buyers that they get from council a natural hazards disclosure, but that they be aware that the standards may vary across the state. We encourage people to be fully aware of what they are buying.

There are a couple of other provisions in this bill that I support. It is quite an extensive bill. It is a thick bill. I appreciate that a feature of this bill is promoting electronic dealings in property, the electronic service of documents and the digital creation and signing of contracts and deeds. These are all things that this bill is promoting and allowing. It also provides for modern terms to be put into lease agreements. There is a whole range of improvements and reforms that are included in this bill. It is a bill that will amend an act that affects the lives of just about every Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.