




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Titles Queensland, Morecroft Family

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.12 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the mean-spirited, Ebenezer Scrooge impersonation of the Treasurer of Queensland, ostensibly keeper of the \$7.6 billion titles office of Queensland. It beggars belief that the Treasurer can ignore the directive of the courts of Queensland to pay the innocent victims of a Queensland fraud over a house they purchased the \$2.7 million compensation they are owed over their home in Mermaid Beach.

The Morecrofts bought their house five years ago before the boom at public auction and did everything honestly and correctly to satisfy all legal compliance issues. Unbeknown to them, the son of a previous owner had fraudulently mortgaged the property with money lenders which resulted in the house being sold as a mortgagee in possession. Subsequent court action returned ownership to the mother of the son, with the courts ordering the Queensland government to compensate the Morecrofts the \$2.7 million the house is now worth. The titles office failed to transfer title of the property to the Morecrofts awaiting the outcome of the court case about the fraud. This has led to the Morecrofts being financially crippled following court costs and the seizure of their home which they had innocently purchased.

This is a one-off case with no precedent to be created by the government settling its \$2.7 million debt to the Morecrofts as ordered by our independent judiciary. The Treasurer in his miserly and ill-advised attitude by appealing the decision of the courts demonstrates a complete lack of empathy and feeling for a totally innocent victim of a substantial fraud in Queensland. This highlights the lack of care the Treasurer has about home ownership in Queensland and I am asking the Premier to step in again and override her Treasurer as she has done before to withdraw the appeal and pay the Morecrofts the \$2.7 million they are owed, allowing them to get back into a home. Dragging out this case will cost the Morecrofts even more pain and financial stress and at the same time cost Queensland taxpayers more legal fees that I am sure the three compassionate and considerate judges of the Court of Appeal will uphold in the Morecroft's sensible award in the lower courts.

It is absurd obstinance that the Treasurer is pursuing this case on innocent victims of a Queensland fraud. If this is the degree of empathy and compassion this Queensland government is prepared to show good law-abiding family people like Jess and Jackie Morecroft, then I fear for everyday Queenslanders facing a despotic and money hungry government unprepared to follow reasonable court direction. The ridiculousness of this appeal could even escalate to the High Court if the bloody-mindedness the Treasurer is demonstrating is not curtailed by the Premier. I genuinely ask that sanity and goodwill prevail and the appeal against the Supreme Court decision be withdrawn.