




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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ADJOURNMENT

Mermaid Beach Electorate, Sex Workers

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (7.25 pm): I am aware that there is a proposal being promulgated by the CFMEU and the radical left of the Labor Party to allow multiple sex workers to ply their trade in residential areas. This is another example of the extreme left in the Labor Party in control, as no-one with any sense of practical outcomes would allow this flawed policy to become law. It has been tried before with disastrous results, and that is why the Labor Party's own legislation restricted multiple sex workers to industrial and commercial areas. After all, it is a business and I am loath to call it 'home occupation'. As a former mayor of Albert shire, we had two big burly ex-coppers in our compliance department—big Bob Lee and big John O'Connor—who would move freelance sex workers on from residential areas, with some being in high-class suburban streets. The alerts to this activity would come from neighbours of the said property who would get knocks on the door at all hours, with sex work customers asking, 'Does Ruby, Fanny or Antoinette live here?' That is quite scary and infuriating. It would be even worse if sex workers are operating out of a Gold Coast high-rise—no pun intended.

From the sex workers' point of view, when the existing legislation was passed by Labor we were told that controlled and organised brothels in industrial and commercial areas gave safety and security to workers who might otherwise be subjected to pimps and protection men and other criminal activity. What has changed? Added to that, the significance of health checks through the existing regime is an important facet of an industry where not all of the participants are 100 per cent socially responsible about caring about passing on sexually communicable disease. Is that a good outcome for a chaotic and crisis-ridden health system? I think not. This will open the door for criminals exploiting the sex industry, with overseas young women being placed in residential apartments and homes without monitoring and due care.

I cannot believe the Palaszczuk government would sign off on legislation that will lead to exploitation and degradation of young women at the hands of unscrupulous operators. The current controlled, checked and operationally directed regime for the sex work industry seems to be working appropriately under the existing legislation. I cannot imagine what has prompted this kneejerk reaction from the loony left faction of the ALP, but I am sure my communities of Mermaid Beach and Broadbeach will be inundated with promiscuous behaviour in my suburbs and the aptly named Hooker Boulevard in Broadbeach will end up being just that. Surely common sense should prevail and this ill-thought, problem-creating, suburb-sabotaging legislation should be abandoned before it sees the light of day in this House. The old adage 'If it ain't broken, don't try to fix it' should apply to this different and ancient existing industry.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Mermaid Beach, did this anticipate the debate?

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I checked the amendments to the legislation this afternoon and this does not impinge on it at all. It is a different matter that is not contained in the amendments that were moved today.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member.