




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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**BODY CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.41 am): In my 17 years in this place, this bill is amongst the worst pieces of legislation this House has contemplated. The union puppets opposite have no idea about the development industry. They are dancing to the music of the development industry and the real estate industry, which have already started to move—and I will talk about that shortly.

I spoke in this House when this was first mentioned at the UDIA conference or the Property Council meeting by the Premier. I said that this is the first attempt in Queensland's history, that I have seen, to enable private persons to acquire a person's house—the first time! I have been in local government and state government, and the only time we have acquired a person's property is for the greater community good. This is for development profit. There is no affordable housing coming out of this. There is no fix to the homelessness problem. This is a sop by a government which is out of ideas on how to fix the rampant problem of rent rises and the shortage of housing in Queensland. We have enormous demand coming from interstate migration, as we have heard from the Treasurer, yet the supply factor has been cut off at the knees by a government that has put a black ban on councils through the state government planning regime in terms of developing greenfield areas.

This is not the answer. I understand that this legislation can address some issues in terms of greedy property owners holding one property for more money and those types of issues. This legislation will enable developers that have 75 per cent of a body corporate to throw out the little old lady or the little old man who has had that house for 20 years. They will be able to throw out the disabled person and his carer who live in that smallish, cheaper unit because that is all they can afford. Is this a Labor government caring about its constituency out there in the community? No. It is a Labor government that has forgotten its roots and has no ideas. It is basically a sop to the development and real estate industries.

I had a communication this week from lawyers and real estate agents who are already using this piece of legislation, even though it is not law yet, to force people to sell out of their community titled unit. There are a lot of people who are living in community title as their home these days. It is a changed world—we get that—but this will mean that their house is not safe from a greedy developer who wants to put up a multimillion dollar high-rise. That is ridiculous. This government will be the architect of a lot of sadness for a lot of people in years to come, and that grieves me greatly. Even when the council had to acquire people's properties for community benefit, I did it with great personal grief because it had been their home and, as that famous film says, a person's home is their castle. For us to attack that ownership through this legislation in this House is greatly disappointing to me.

I am sure that Sir Robert Menzies—who saw home ownership as the great Australian dream coming into the 1950s out of the war—would be rolling in his grave to see this legislation being passed through this House. This government is totally out of ideas, is totally out of association and has no idea

what the real estate agents and property agents will do to make this happen. I have correspondence from one person who has owned his house for 22 years. His email states—

Due to the extreme capital growth of the Broadbeach real estate area—

which is my area—

our block has become a prime target for greedy real estate agents and developers whose behaviour ranges from friendly to antagonistic and threatening.

Is this what we want in our communities? It grieves me greatly to see this as a hallmark of the government of the 57th Parliament which is out of ideas and picking on those people who cannot defend themselves. Some members on that side have jumped up and down in this House and said, 'We've given them legal protection.' These people cannot afford legal protection and they will be threatened and done out of their home by these greedy developers. I get that there is a lot of value in these sites, particularly those along the light rail in Mermaid Beach and areas in my patch, but these people deserve to have their home. A person's husband or wife may have died there and they may have lived in the home for 20 years. They deserve the security of living in their own home without the threat of being kicked out—a threat that this government has given to developers. I find it absolutely tragic that this government is putting this legislation through.

This bill could be fixed with one clause. If we had an exclusion for property owners who had occupied their house for the last seven years at least, that would give surety to the home owner and would take out all of the other players who are holding it for all of the other greedy reasons, viewing reasons and all the things that should not be held. One small clause could have fixed it but this government did not want to consider it. It just wanted to run forward and give a sop to the development industry. I have spoken to the big developers down there. I know the big developers and I know how they work. They say exactly what I am saying is the right way to go. The people who have occupied it—whether it is the little old lady or the disabled person—are the ones who should be protected morally. Those developers are good with that. It is all the greedy ones who would like to see this legislation and would like to be a part of it.

Government members interjected.

Mr STEVENS: They can jump up and down over there because they are all puppets with no idea of the development industry—none. They just dance to the union boys, and the union boys want a few more jobs on the development sites. I get that. A lot of money flows through to those union boys from those development sites, I can assure you of that. On all the jobs that are there, you see all the CFMEU flags everywhere. I do not know which members over there on the other side are members of the CFMEU, but you can understand why they are all for this development at any cost. Kick the little old lady out, kick the disabled guy out—it does not matter. This is an absolute blight on this government in terms of putting this legislation through. It is the first time in Queensland that private people will be able to kick other people out of their home. That is the fact of this legislation. Government members should hang their heads in shame.

There is one bright spot in the whole piece of the bill that we are hearing today, and it is 'Mark's law'. That sunset clause was a load of rubbish for the development industry. It was there under the government's watch, all the way through for the last eight years, yet they allowed it to happen. Mark bringing it to the attention of the House, of the public, of the media has seen a major turnaround where we finally see this good legislation. I congratulate the member for Theodore on his hard work for his community. It is a wonderful achievement. His time in this parliament will be remembered by 'Mark's law', protecting those young families who have been robbed of buying their land in the proper places and getting a home, as they are entitled to, and not seeing it squeezed out of their reach. Our home in Australia is our primary asset—the thing we all work to—and these guys in government have done two things. They have ruined it for one lot of people and in this legislation 'Mark's law' has saved it for many.