




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MAIWAR

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ADJOURNMENT

Toondah Harbour Development

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (6.22 pm): Good on you, Ronan, and good luck with that, mate. In more good news, Walker Corporation has just withdrawn its application for the Toondah Harbour development. The Toondah Harbour development was always a terrible idea, and the Greens have said so from the outset. As both of the major parties change out of their cheerleading uniforms for this hugely unpopular project, I think it is worth a quick trip down memory lane.

It was, of course, the Newman LNP government that declared the PDA over Toondah Harbour in 2013. Let's not forget that Labor opposed these PDAs in 2012, with the former member for South Brisbane, Jackie Trad, calling them 'an outrageous abuse and concentration of power' that was about giving government land away to 'its developer mates'. Too true. But when Labor was in government in 2015 they went on and endorsed the Toondah Harbour PDA. In 2016 Labor signed a secret development agreement with the Walker Corporation and Redland City Council. They later spent at least \$67,000 in court to keep that agreement secret after community group Redlands 2030 made a successful RTI application for its release.

That was all because by this time there was already enormous community opposition and a campaign against the Toondah Harbour development. It privatised publicly owned foreshore, trashed community consultation and threatened the Moreton Bay Wetlands, which are protected under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. Unfortunately for Queensland Labor, that convention—to which Australia is a signatory—meant that we had obligations to protect those wetlands, so from 2016-17 the Queensland environment department, under the leadership of none other than then minister Steven Miles, lobbied the federal government to change the boundaries of the protected wetlands for the Toondah development. The problem is that Ramsar says you cannot do that unless it is in the urgent national interest. It is a bit tricky to argue that a private developer building 3,600 luxury apartments and some shops right on top of critical habitat for threatened species was in the urgent national interest.

It is still unclear why Labor pushed Walker's plan so hard instead of just upgrading the ferry terminal. Granted, this was happening around the same time that Walker Corporation donated \$23,000 to Queensland Labor and paid for cash-for-access meetings with Labor ministers, but those were not Walker's only timely political donations. Who could forget the \$200,000 donated to the Liberals right after the federal environment department said the development was clearly unacceptable. Then Liberal environment minister Josh Frydenberg ignored that advice to progress to the next stage of development. It is a testament to the community campaign that Walker's plans are now dead. The staggering lengths to which Labor and the LNP have gone to gift this land and water to a private developer and political donor and to trash critical habitat cannot be forgotten. We need a commitment from the government now that they will not pursue any private development at this site.