




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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**RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AND ROOMING ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; MANUFACTURED HOMES (RESIDENTIAL
PARKS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.34 pm): I rise to talk to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Amendment Bill. Every time this government does something it makes it slightly worse for investors, and that is the problem we face with both of these bills. In terms of the residential tenancies bill, we have to face the fact that in the last year 56,000 investment properties have left the marketplace because of the changes that this government has made in various bills over the last few years. It is all very well to put in place protections for those renters, but if there are no rental properties for these people to rent then the outcome is not going to be good. I have been warning about this for a number of years every time this government brings a bill on this issue before the House.

There are a couple of things in the residential tenancies bill that concern me because it may encourage more people to leave the market. The bill stops rental companies and investors from trying to seek financial information about the people who may rent their property, it stops them from asking how many people are going to live in that property, and it also stops them from asking how many animals or what types of animals may live in the property. We have heard from investors on numerous occasions—and I am sure every member in the House would have heard this—that they are concerned that they no longer have control over what happens in their properties, for example, whether the walls are painted or there is a dog that cannot control its bladder function wandering through the house. Do not get me wrong: I have a dog and I love dogs and it is very important for people to have dogs, but it should be to some extent—

Mr Power: What sort of dog?

Mr HART: I have a cavoodle. I will show you a photo later.

Ms Pugh: Table it.

Mr HART: I cannot table it. I do not have a picture of it but I will try later. It is very important for people to have pets—I totally agree with that—but at the end of the day it needs to be a decision of the person who actually owns the property as to whether they are happy to have that dog on their property. That is how investors think. If we change that—and this bill is going to change that—then those investors may leave the investment pool and those properties may not be available anymore. All we are doing is creating a bigger and bigger problem. I know I will get slammed by members on the other side for being anti dog, anti cat or whatever it is, but that is not the case at all and it would be misleading to go down that road.

When it comes to asking about the financial situation of the renter, the LNP highlighted in our statement of reservations that the community housing sector had told us that under some of the bills that they operate they charge a percentage of what people earn. Therefore, if you can no longer ask

what people earn, you have created another massive problem in the community housing sector. Some exemptions were listed in the original bill, but the community housing sector told us that there are a number of acts that apply to their sector that were not mentioned in the legislation and the committee would recommend that the government look at that.

I have spoken a number of times in this place about committee reports. The committee reports are the report of the chair, the report of the government, but not necessarily a report of the whole committee. This committee report, when it was written, did not mention that, did not put that forward as a recommendation. I have been told second-hand because I have not seen the amendments yet, but I am glad to hear that apparently the government was listening to what the LNP had said and that those changes have been forthcoming. I look forward to that. However, I hold grave concerns that we may lose another 56,000 properties next year from the rental pool, and that will be a massive problem.

On the manufactured homes front, this has been something which has been coming for a long time. As the member for Bundaberg and the member for Bancroft said, as a former shadow minister for housing I have had numerous conversations with the manufactured homes sector, as has the member for Everton and as has just about every shadow minister on this side of the House. We have had numerous conversations. To play politics with this whole discussion is absolutely disgusting.

We need to be cognisant that there are various different types of manufactured home parks—from a caravan that has had its wheels taken away to a multimillion dollar house. That is how wide and varied they are. The site agreements that are in place take into account all of these parks in general. The big issue that these tenants in manufactured home parks have is that some of the sites, including a site with a caravan that has had its wheels taken off, attracted the same rate as a multimillion dollar manufactured home park with a pool, a tennis court, a bowling club, a bar and whatever else, and that was not appropriate.

With regard to the site rent review, we heard that some of the site rent reviews were coming back with nine per cent and 10 per cent a year, which makes it very difficult for someone who lives on a pension—and we heard from many pensioners living in these parks—to keep up with those rent increases. The government has taken away that site rent review, and I fully support that. However, it has instead put in place a 3.5 per cent a year increase or an average of the CPI over the eight capital cities in Australia, whichever is the highest, so the base for rent increases is going to be 3.5 per cent. That 3.5 per cent over 10 years is 35 per cent. Some of these people are facing a 35 per cent increase over 10 years into the future. Of course, once they realised that, they then were thinking, 'Maybe this is not the best outcome possible for us.'

Another big issue that was raised, which really was skimmed across in the committee chair's report, was the buyback situation. We heard from a lot of the park owners that they did not think the buyback situation was going to be a problem for them because many of these sites are sold pretty quickly. If things change then that may change, but for the moment they are sold pretty quickly. The issue becomes a GST issue, which is more a federal issue than a state issue. If a company which owns a manufactured park is forced to buy back a property, then there is GST involved in that process. Because they are buying it from an individual person, they cannot claim an input credit for it. They may be buying a property for \$500,000 and selling it for \$500,000, but there is 10 per cent GST that has to be paid somewhere and they cannot claim it back. It is an issue that the committee has skimmed over, and I do not think the government has fully considered it. I would really appreciate the minister responding to the GST issue in her summing-up that happens later to see how that may be solved. There may be some negotiation with the federal government about input credits or something else, but that may be a real issue. Overall, I think this is probably a good outcome for the people who live in manufactured home parks and it has been a very long time coming. I support the bill.