




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

---

Record of Proceedings, 11 June 2024

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (7.25 pm): I rise to speak on this bill in relation to coming up with solutions for the housing issues. As the chair of our committee rightly said, we have not put in a statement of reservation and the LNP will not be voting against this legislation because any effort to satisfy the lack of housing in Queensland will be supported. This is not a problem that has popped up today, four months from the election; it is a problem that has been in the making for a number of years.

I can guarantee that a big part of the problem that is now being recognised federally is that the enormous immigration to Australia we have had from those COVID years and prior has created the need for more housing right across the board in Queensland. We should have seen that. There were people in charge of planning. The new Premier was, as the shadow minister correctly said, the minister for planning and the minister for local government and he should have seen that this was coming. We have put nearly a million people into Queensland since 2015, so that tells us that we need more housing and we need more affordable housing. It is very difficult to get affordable housing when there are enormous pressures on the demand side. This forces prices for real estate right through the roof, it forces rent on those capital investment properties right through the roof and it puts people out into cars and tent cities, which is totally unacceptable for our Australian way of life and our Queensland way of life as well.

The chair was correct that this bill will assist in revisiting some priority development areas that have provided difficulties for the development of those areas. We did have some complaints from submitters in relation to the compulsory acquisition of properties—that basically there were no appeal rights. Another issue for submitters on this bill was about getting an unbiased decision-maker on whether it should go ahead or not.

The bottom line is that this bill will not solve our housing problem before 26 October. One gets the horrible feeling that this bill is a kneejerk reaction to a problem that has finally hit the radar—and I do not know whether that happened through polling or what. This problem has been building for years and it has been exacerbated by the planning for this state. Even the Gold Coast city council is now having difficulties getting its city plan passed. Again, it is the state government which is causing road blocks to what the Gold Coast city would like to see in the development of its own city.

It has a right, as the duly elected representative of the people of the Gold Coast, to put forward the plan that they consider is appropriate for development of the future and not be overridden by the state on what the state want to jam in to 'sardine city' along the Gold Coast Light Rail route which basically will not create any affordable housing. It is very expensive land down there. They will be very expensive units when that land is built on down there, so it does not address the affordable housing issue one iota.

The minister's considered call-in of the Arundel project was absolutely a total smack in the face for Gold Coast city council that had rejected that proposal of 380 very rich, high-end houses being built on private, open space. That golf course at Arundel was deliberately let in by the Gold Coast city council,

back when the development for houses was to be built around it, and they were sold on the basis that they were getting a golf course which would be open space. It had koalas, and it was the lungs and the breathing area for the people living in that Arundel area. For the minister to call that in from Melbourne developers, 3 Group, amazes me because it was not about affordable housing; it was about Melbourne developers, probably friends of Daniel Andrews, who have come up here and tried to push their way into the Gold Coast for a development on that particular site.

The minister should reconsider. There are development proposals for the site that will work. You only have to look at the Lakelands golf course and the Surfers Paradise golf course with a couple of high-rise unit blocks on them that basically cater for affordable housing. I was in the Mermaid Beach electorate for the opening of a retirement village last week, and basically the retirement people are looking at it, as Parkwood have a fantastic retirement village for the population down there. However, it is not an area for development of high-residential type houses which will cost millions of dollars and will not address the housing issue one iota.

While I am talking about the shortage of land, as the minister said, on the Gold Coast, we have 10,000 hectares of cane land, with a green hand right across it, that the government will not touch. I tell you why they will not touch it. They will not touch it because Surfers Paradise is near water, Broadwater is near water, Hope Island is near water and Sanctuary Cove is near water. They go rolled gold blue LNP. That is exactly why the Labor Party will not touch those particular lands in the cane field, near the beautiful Moreton Bay, in forms of development because it does provide a wonderful area for future development of wonderful housing estates, as we have in Sanctuary Cove, Hope Island and other areas.

What they have done is they have failed to plan. Four months out from an election is not a time to put your plan in place to fix everything. As the Treasurer said today, 'Do not go on our previous record of nine years, please give us another go.' I do not think the Queensland public will fall for the tricks of Labor on 26 October because basically they have known that these problems we have today with the housing crisis have been caused by the lack of proper planning and proper allowance of development for the area.

Coming in now at this late stage to try to address the issue through this particular bill, which will assist in some developments around Queensland, I have no doubt—that is why we are supporting the bill—is not the answer. There will be nothing built because of this between now and 26 October. Even though the areas covered in this particular bill are applicable and will be utilised in the future, it is not the answer or the panacea for the housing crisis we have in Queensland.

Proper planning and proper development, including development in the right areas, and not in the high-residential areas of the multimillion-dollar properties along the Gold Coast Light Rail, is the answer to the housing problem. Proper planning and proper development in concert with councils, because they are the ones that know for their local communities what the best outcome is for their longer term planning and livability of the city is the way to go for any future government from 26 October. I am hopeful that Queenslanders will recognise that and show Labor the door in 2024.