



Speech by

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VALUATION OF LAND AMENDMENT BILL

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (4.20 p.m.): I rise to speak very briefly in support of the Valuation of Land Amendment Bill which was brought to the House by the Minister for Natural Resources and, of course, to point out—in a nice way—what I see as the silliness of the opposition's position.

This bill clarifies the process whereby shopping centres are valued. The issue is that in the past the land value of big shopping centres such as Indooroopilly Shopping Centre was calculated by taking the sale prices of unimproved land in the area and equating those values with the value of the whole shopping centre block. The difficulty here, of course, is that a big single block zoned for commercial purposes is really worth a lot more than the multiple of lots of single adjacent house blocks. Under this method, shopping centres were greatly undervalued and shopping centre owners were not paying their fair share of land tax and rates. Big shopping centre owners were paying a lot less in land value based taxes for centres in Queensland than they were in other states. While they did not pay their fair share of land value based taxes, other land-holders such as ordinary home owners were effectively cross-subsidising them.

Last year the Department of Natural Resources sought to amend this anomaly and effectively revalued these properties. The subsequent uproar from shopping centre owners and the Property Council included the quite valid argument that the goodwill associated with the establishment of a shopping centre should be subtracted from its market value in much the same way as is the value of the buildings. This is a fair point and this amendment which enacts it is good policy.

A key part of the amendment, however, is that there should be a 20 per cent cap on what the value of that goodwill can be established as being. This is the part, of course, that the opposition has indicated today that it disagrees with. But the 20 per cent cap is absolutely central to the process of making equitable the amount of land tax that shopping centre owners pay as compared with the rest of us and, indeed, the amount of rates that they pay. So the opposition's position in arguing that it supports the bill but it does not agree with an absolutely central tenet of it is really a bit foolish.

I do not intend merely to spend time speaking about the nitty-gritty of land valuations. I wish to make the point that it is right to support sensible and equitable revenue measures. Some people in politics spend a lot of time trying to pretend that we can continually provide better services without increasing revenue. This is dumb and it is dishonest, and people know that. There are other people in politics, such as the Nationals, who subscribe philosophically to the notion that, while we tax small businesses such as farms and individuals, we should also take the trouble to tax the big end of town. Ask anyone in the street, with the possible exception of Kerry Packer, and they will agree with that philosophy. But what are the members of the National Party doing today? They are trying to be cheap populists; they are trying to argue that on this particular matter the big end of town should have a quite significant tax cut and that we should dress it up as the value of goodwill.

What we are legislating today is a sensible, equitable measure which makes sure that, just as everyone else is paying their fair share of land tax and rates, so too are the wealthy foreigners and the big corporations that own shopping centres. If the opposition does not agree with that it should not try to be tricky about it. Let its members come in here and say so. Let them treat Queenslanders like fools by telling them that the members of the opposition want more money to run their own opposition office; they want more money for country racing; they are going to spend more on hospitals, schools and police; and somehow they are just going to pluck the money for it out of thin air. The members opposite might be stupid enough to believe that, but other Queenslanders are not. I do not believe it, and that is why I support the bill before the House.