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# Red tape ruination

by Ann Wason Moore

PROPERTY heavyweight Gordon Douglas has warned that the Gold Coast's golden era of development and growth is coming to a close, crippled by State Government legislation.

In launching *Passion, Power And Prejudice*, a history of the Gold Coast, Mr Douglas said a sequel to the book might not have a happy ending.

Hailing author and development consultant Geoff Burchill's 680-page tome, he said the Gold Coast could never be created under modern development guidelines.

"To build this city today would be impossible. That is a sad fact," said Mr Douglas, the co-founder of PRDnationwide.

"The planning regime in Queensland was meant to help development but it's gone the other way.

## Mayor launches into job and ends up the fall guy

HE was there to launch a book but Mayor Ron Clarke accidentally launched himself off stage instead.

In a reverse stage-dive, Cr Clarke took a tumble from the back of a 60cm platform while try-

ing to reach the microphone and introduce author Geoff Burchill.

A smiling Cr Clarke suddenly disappeared from sight as he stepped cleanly off stage and landed with a bounce on his back.

Though shaken, Cr Clarke was uninjured.

The audience was unsure whether to react with laughter or concern. One punter yelled 'the Mayor with flair who never got there'.

Cr Clarke returned to

his seat to recover his composure before returning to the lectern.

"Terry Jackman pushed me," he joked, pointing at the Tourism Queensland chief. "It's all right, now I can look for someone to sue."

"Too often it is impossible to get our grand plans and designs off the ground.

"Local governments have equally suffered, there are too many reports to file, too much red tape to possibly cut through. Our community is paying a great price as a result. It's a disaster."

Mr Burchill described himself as a whistleblower in the crisis.

As a master planner who spent 40 years helping to transform the Gold Coast from seaside village to thriving tourist mecca, he said he held the credentials to criticise.

"Everyone involved in this city knows there is something seriously wrong but no one is doing anything about it because they are too scared to talk," he said.

"I'm not actively in the game any

more so I decided it was time to say what's on everyone's mind.

"This situation is not unlike the Queensland Health crisis."

Mr Burchill said the Gold Coast City Council was in danger of being overtaken by people with anti-development agendas.

He said the future of the Gold Coast was unimaginable and while checks and balances must be in

place for new projects, developers must be 'free to move'.

"The future of this city by 2026 is going to be a place that we couldn't even dream of at the moment," he said. "Nothing is going to stop the flood of people coming here and we must find ways to build up the infrastructure to support them.

"No one wants a future where you have to line up around the block at the bottle shop.

"Unfortunately, this means that many long-term residents are going to be faced with development realities they don't like.

"The council must be strong and make these tough decisions. Development is the key to our future.

"In the golden era of the '60s and '70s, developers were free to move. They didn't have all the red tape, and that is the atmosphere we must somehow re-create."