



Speech by

Hon. D. WELLS

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Hansard 12 November 1998

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Sellars Holdings Ltd

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Education) (9.58 a.m.), by leave: On 18 September 1998, the member for Nicklin asked a question without notice relating to the circumstances surrounding the offer of compensation to Sellars Holdings for the acquisition of their concrete batching plant adjacent to the Maleny State High School.

In response to that question from the member for Nicklin, I said that I would refer the matter to the Treasurer to arrange for an independent audit of all the circumstances pertaining to this matter. The Honourable the Treasurer in turn wrote to the Auditor-General on 7 October 1998 requesting that the Queensland Audit Office review the processes involved in the acquisition of land from Sellars Holdings Ltd at Maleny. The review requested consideration of the following points—

the process of acquisition;

the process of negotiation; and

the assessment of compensation, including the assessment of goodwill, land and improvements and disturbance within the terms of the Acquisition of Land Act 1967.

Comment was also requested on whether the timing of negotiations appeared to be in any way related to the timing of the June 1998 State election. The Queensland Audit Office has completed its review and has reported in terms of the points referred to above.

I table a copy of the Auditor-General's report. In summary, the Auditor-General found that the process of resumption of the land owned by Sellars Holdings followed all applicable requirements of the Acquisition of Land Act. Secondly, it was found that the process of negotiation was soundly based and proper for achieving an effective agreement and for protecting the interests of the State. Thirdly, the Auditor-General found that, based on the information supplied to him and the general principles used for the valuation, the assessment of compensation appeared reasonable. Moreover, it was the Auditor-General's view that the timing of the negotiations did not appear due in any way to the recent State election.

While recognising that the member for Nicklin was right to raise the concerns that he did, and to give voice as the elected representative to the concerns being publicly expressed by members of the Maleny community, particularly the Maleny High School P & C, I am nonetheless reassured that the processes of good public administration in this instance have been confirmed. I thank the Auditor-General for providing a prompt and thorough response to the issues raised, and I believe that this once again confirms the commitment of this Government to ensuring an accountable administration of public funds.
