



Speech by

**Dr LESLEY CLARK**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Hansard 6 August 1998

**MACHANS BEACH RESIDENTS; AIR SERVICES AUSTRALIA**

**Dr CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (10.27 a.m.): I wish to tell the House about an incident that occurred some days after my election to this place. I received a very urgent phone call from residents at Machans Beach, one of the townships located close to the Cairns Airport. A meeting was held there. I arrived at the meeting to be confronted by very many angry and concerned residents who had just received in the mail a letter to tell them that the very next morning contractors were going to be arriving to construct a two metre high chain mesh fence along the perimeter of an area known as the radar field, which is a very large open grassed area which contains some navigation aids. This was a clear example of Air Services Australia bulldozing its way into the lives of these people. There was no consultation. It was intending to simply proceed with this particular activity, which is going to have a very significant impact on the lives of Machans Beach residents.

**Mr Purcell:** Shame!

**Dr CLARK:** It was a shame. They were just not prepared. This was an example of Canberra bureaucrats just going ahead totally regardless of the wishes of residents.

Fortunately, I was able to intervene at that meeting and the Air Services Australia local officers were prepared to defer the building of the fence. We have since had a public meeting at which Air Services Australia officers heard very clearly from the community their concerns. The community does recognise that there are some vandalism problems, but there are other alternatives to solve those problems. That is what we see: community based solutions, not bulldoze solutions from Canberra. I am very hopeful that we are going to see a response from Air Services Australia that will, in fact, take up those suggestions from the community so that we can solve this problem in a way that will satisfy their needs as well as the needs of Air Services Australia.

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