



Speech by

Mr ALLAN GRICE, OAM

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Hansard 8 June 1999

PUBLIC HOUSING, BROADWATER ELECTORATE

Mr GRICE (Broadwater—NPA) (12.07 p.m.): This morning I tabled in the House a petition from 340 residents in the electorate of Broadwater with respect to public housing in that electorate, particularly in the suburb of Labrador. I point out that there is no complaint from any of those constituents or the 300 people who attended a rally last Sunday week, or indeed from me, about people who live in public housing. The petition signed by 340 people stated—

"While we residents of Labrador have no objection to the provision of public housing, we do believe, however, that a point of saturation has occurred in parts of our local area and further building should cease."

Further they stated—

"... to ensure that Public Housing be maintained at current levels but be spread out through the community in even fashion and that this apply to portions of suburbs as well as suburbs and electorates."

Mr Purcell: Send them down to me, brother. I'll have 'em.

Mr GRICE: If the member cares to listen instead of carrying on with his normal buffoonery, I might be able to tell him something.

There is no intention to limit, reduce or stop extra housing going into the suburb of Labrador. However, in an area around Parker and Bath Streets there is an overconcentration of public housing. There are lots of houses and residences there. Lots have been built and are under construction. There is also vacant land there.

In fact, I will quote a couple of statistics of interest—and, I might say, these come from briefing notes from the Minister's department, for which I thank him. In addition to the 407 existing public rental dwellings in Labrador—bearing in mind that the complaint and the petition is with regard to a concentrated area—during the 1998-99 financial year it is planned to commence construction on 57 dwellings, consisting of 27 seniors units, 20 apartments, eight attached houses and two duplex units, and purchase three dwellings.

Further, the briefing notes state that in Labrador the department's vacant land-holding comprises seven lots of vacant land totalling 12,400 square metres. Two lots are detached housing sites and the remainder are medium density sites set aside for seniors units, apartments and attached houses. In addition, the department has two partially developed sites totalling 1,680 square metres for future development. Further, of the 24 dwellings commenced, six are apartments, eight are attached houses, eight are seniors units and two are duplexes. The remaining 33 dwellings are expected to commence before 30 June.

The Minister has advised me that he will address this petition. He advises me that he is aware of the problem and will get back to me and, indeed, the petitioners with an answer. What I would ask the Minister to consider also is that, in relation to some of the vacant lots or even perhaps some of the newly purchased houses, a fresh assessment be made of those lots. Maybe they could be resold, because I know the department is always pretty diligent in buying things at market price, so that it can get out of some of those vacant lots if they are in the Bath/Parker Streets area and go to other areas of Labrador.

I say again that there is no complaint about public housing in Labrador; it is just this cluster effect. It has been proven many, many times in many jurisdictions that clustered public housing is no good for society or for the people who live there. There are just no positives. Why it is that housing departments seem to have a mind-set to come up with clusters of public housing is just beyond me. As I say, again, there is no complaint about public housing in Labrador; it is just the cluster in some areas of Labrador.

The Minister also advised me—and I thank him for his advice—that an instruction had been given to the department that planning and building in different local shires would follow local shire requirements. I understand that there is no requirement on behalf of the department to limit itself to any restrictions that are implied by local council. However, the Minister has issued an instruction that, wherever possible, the department should conform to local council requirements, particularly with regard to vegetation and landscaping. But I would ask him to especially look at the existence, particularly in the Gold Coast area, of established trees. I am aware of some very old poinsettia trees that have gone over and others that are probably planned to go over in quite a large development in Parker Street at the moment.

The other thing that I particularly want to say is that the only slight downside from the Minister on this particular point is a press release that he made mentioning how many public dwellings were built during the time of the coalition Government. This is not a political problem. I am not interested in how many public housing dwellings were built during the Goss era or our era or up until today. This is not a problem of politics of Labor and conservative sides; this is a people problem.

I have not had any part in the instigation of this petition. I did not organise the public meeting. This is a pure form of people power. These people in Labrador—and they vote right down the centre, let me tell honourable members—have put this petition together. These people have had the meeting. I was a little disappointed to see the Minister's press release mentioning how many units were built during the time of the coalition Government. This is a people problem; it is not a political problem. I think that the Minister particularly should look at some of the stock that he has at the moment and, if some of the blocks of land are too close to that Parker/Bath Streets area, they could be sold and others perhaps purchased in Biggera Waters or other surrounding suburbs. That would be very much appreciated by these residents.

As the Minister would know, for every one signature on a petition, there are another 10 people out there who would be willing to sign that petition if the option was made available to them. I ask the Minister to look at the stock that he currently has. I ask him to look at the houses that are newly bought but not yet perhaps modified for aged use and hopefully he will be able to get back to us and give us some good news with regard to that issue.

I just want to say again in closing that this is not a political problem. This is not anything to do with the Labor Party or the conservatives or the National Party; it is something that these people in my electorate are saying, "We have no complaint about the number of public housing sites and dwellings in the electorate, but we do have a complaint about a cluster in the electorate. Please do something about it."
