



Speech by

## Mr BRUCE LAMING

### MEMBER FOR MOOLOOLAH

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Hansard 28 April 1999

#### PERFORMANCE OF MINISTERS

**Mr LAMING** (Mooloolah—LP) (6.26 p.m.): I rise tonight to speak to this motion and to bring to the attention of the House, as my colleagues have done before me, the disastrous performance of Ministers of the Beattie Government and, in my case, the particular failings of the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing.

What I would like to raise and highlight tonight are some of the more memorable policy blunders and broken promises by this Minister—like the broken promise to the senior citizens of the Sunshine Coast who were promised by the Beattie Labor Government, in its September Budget, that work would commence on an \$8m high-rise seniors complex at Maroochydore this financial year. It is now almost the month of May, and what have we seen? Nothing! Zip! The Minister has not even settled on a preferred site, let alone purchased the land on which the complex is to be constructed.

Eleven months ago, the coalition Government announced plans to build Queensland's first ever purpose-built multilevel accommodation for seniors and the disabled. It was planned to be six to eight storeys high, be within two kilometres of the heart of Maroochydore and cost \$8m. It would house up to 90 people and address the challenge of 275 people who were on the waitlist at that time. Now, nearly 12 months later, this important project is no further advanced. The only advance has been the seniors waitlist, which has climbed to a staggering 325. While nothing at all appears to have happened in the first six months of this Government's incumbency, this year has been little better, with no firm decisions made or commitment given. It is not just a case of bricks and mortar or missed deadlines. A community expectation has naturally built up among the many seniors on the Sunshine Coast that this building would have at least commenced by now.

I am advised that many elderly people were living in substandard accommodation while anything reasonable in the area was virtually beyond their means. It has now become obvious that this project is most unlikely to even be commenced this financial year. And unless the Minister gets a move on, even the site will not be secured before 30 June. As we are now looking at months and months before this project will be completed, I call on the Minister to announce what plans he has to accommodate those seniors on the Sunshine Coast waitlist in the short term. There is little doubt in my mind that, had Labor not come to power last year, this project would be well under way. And it should be remembered that this is the Minister who prances around Queensland claiming the virtues of job creation from his capital works expenditure—expenditure that he has not put into this project and expenditure that will not now create jobs. And why will it not create jobs? Because the Minister, in a vain effort to expend his capital works budget, so as to avoid an underspend, will spot purchase houses—spot purchases that will not generate jobs, except maybe for a receptionist at a real estate agent's office. Such purchases may provide some housing stock for seniors, but will be an example of this can't do Government.

The Minister has already proven that he has problems in calculating job creation figures. As the Opposition has raised previously in this House, the Minister was a willing participant in a deliberate Government cover-up to prevent the truth surfacing about the fraudulent job creation claims associated with this Government's capital works budget.

However, what about policy blunders of this Minister? Let me turn the attention of honourable members to the abolition of the Community Housing Grants Board. The Minister disbanded the board last year despite departmental advice that rural Queenslanders were quite happy with its operations. He

reclaimed ministerial control of all grant allocations so that he can continue the old Labor practice of highly political allocation of funds.

He has since written to a number of housing and community organisations seeking their nominations for a new body to help develop policies and priorities. These are organisations that may, through their membership, represent sectional interest groups rather than the broader interests of all Queenslanders.

One also has to consider the bureaucratic blunders overseen by this Minister. What about the home invasion issue that I raised today in the House? This was an issue involving a woman who became a victim of crime not once, but twice, because of maladministration by a commercialised business unit within the Minister's portfolio. This was not just a robbery. The loss of personal and sentimental items, such as family photographs and videos, is quite distressing to anybody.

What has happened to the priority housing system? The Priority Housing Committee was disbanded. Who is now the arbiter of appeals in this most important aspect of public housing? That is an example of this can't do Government.

Time expired.

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