



Speech by

DESLEY BOYLE

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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HOMELESS PEOPLE IN CAIRNS CBD

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (11.16 p.m.): For a long time we have had a problem with homeless people and with people who drink excessive alcohol in the Cairns CBD. A high proportion of these people come from out of Cairns. The problem has flared again in recent times, particularly since the siting—a decision by the previous Borbidge Government—of a night shelter in Quigley Street at a neighbourhood close to the City of Cairns. There was no consultation with the people and the problems that are occurring in the neighbourhood now are indeed angering the people because of that lack of consultation. The honourable member for Moggill was at the centre of that decision when he was part of the Borbidge Government. He was also at the centre of awarding a tender—to an out of town company, I might say—that has left us with many physical problems in the building that it has cost us many thousands of dollars to redress.

The honourable member for Moggill came to Cairns recently. What did he do to redress the problems that he and his Government caused in the past? Did he speak with the residents about the siting and the lack of consultation? Did he speak to the people who were on the streets of Cairns and who were homeless and who have alcohol problems? Not at all! Instead, he gained lots of media attention, claiming that the use of the night shelter had in fact been changed and that it was now some kind of hostel for backpackers from Bavaria. He did himself no good in making those spurious claims. He embarrassed his Liberal Party friends, he embarrassed his colleagues on the Opposition benches and he angered the residents even further. It was poor politics when he made those decisions and it was poor politics in daring to come to Cairns now and, as it were, laugh at this very serious problem.

I am pleased to say, however, that we do have some very good working relationships that will hopefully lead to long-term decisions to resolve this long-term problem. I would like to give credit—as the member for Moggill did not—to the fine residents of the area who are attempting to be reasonable while still determined to resolve this problem for their own peace of mind. I give credit, too, to the staff of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy Development and to staff of the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care and to the police. Together we, the residents, the people who have the problems and those Government servants are working together to find both short-term and long-term solutions that will hopefully resolve the problems left to us by the previous Government and resolve this longer term problem I hope for all time.
