



Speech by

Mr DOUG SLACK

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard 8 June 1999

NELLY BAY DEVELOPMENT, MAGNETIC ISLAND

Mr SLACK (Burnett—NPA) (6.29 p.m.): The question is what this debate is really about. What it really is about is not that everyone on the Government side of the House supports the development on Nelly Bay, as the Deputy Premier claimed; the reality is that, as per the document that was leaked, the member for Townsville as the Premier's representative in Townsville has called for an independent review of that decision. That is what it is about. He does not support the development. I will read to the Parliament the third leg of his recommended action. It states—

"That an independent reviewer be appointed to consult widely with sea and land transport operators, the business community and the general public on Magnetic Island in regard to the relative social, economic and environmental merits of the range of options for the spending of the \$6 million in public funds which might include:

1) proceeding with the NBH development proposal"—

that is just one option—

"2) constructing at Nelly Bay a public ferry landing, low-profile terminal building, barge landing, public car parks, access road, public boat ramp, landscaping and clean up of the beach ..."

That is an alternative development that would clean up the blight that is already there. It needs to be cleaned up. But it is not the development as proposed by Nelly Bay Holdings, which is what this Parliament and what the Government was proposing and what Jim Elder as Deputy Premier has given a commitment to the people of Townsville to do as soon as the GBRMPA approval is forthcoming.

That is the reality. In the proposed alternative the member for Townsville and the member for Mundingburra have questioned that method to clean up Nelly Bay. The reality is that over the past 10 years, there had not been a resolution until we came into Government and committed \$6m. We were the Government that committed \$6m to the private company which was going to take the initiative, which was prepared to put itself on the line, which had the confidence and which, according to all the reviews that we had conducted, had the expertise to do it. It was not in the position, nor was any other developer, to be able to comply with the original requirements that were attached to the Nelly Bay development.

As Minister I visited that particular area at least twice. I talked to the people involved, and there were many differing opinions. When I talked to the people involved and we looked at the problems. We looked at the possibility of building an alternative jetty and not proceeding with the development. We looked at all those options and then came to the decision to provide the \$6m. The private development companies just could not make the development stack up without our contributing to the public infrastructure, which would be to the benefit of the people of Nelly Bay and the people of Magnetic Island. They could not do it without a Government contribution.

The members for Townsville and Mundingburra have been prepared to carry on with that contribution, but they want to divert it away from giving it to the private developers. That is not consistent with their Government's position. That is the reality. Their position has not been consistent with their Government's position. What are they going to do— vote for the Government's position or go along with their Left Wing mates to whom they owe a few favours? That is what it is about in Townsville.

The Left Wing of the Labor Party in Townsville has never supported the Nelly Bay development and those members know it. The Left Wing has supported them and they are fulfilling a commitment to it.

Mr Borbidge: You needed their votes for preselection.

Mr SLACK: That is right, they needed its votes. They needed its support for preselection, and it gave that support to them. So the chickens are now coming home to roost and they are fulfilling their obligation to the Left Wing. It does not matter how many reviews there are of the Nelly Bay development; all those independent reviewers will come up with the same thing: that that development should go ahead. The reality is that the supporters of the members for Townsville and Mundingburra do not want it to go ahead—contrary to the opinion of the majority of the people there.

The member opposite quoted a person from Townsville Enterprise. Townsville Enterprise voted unanimously this morning reiterate its position—voted overwhelmingly and unanimously to support the development that has been proposed by the Government in this particular instance, which was a carry-on from the \$6m that we had committed. The Deputy Premier talked about what he did when the Goss Government was in power—nothing!

Time expired.
