



Speech by

**HOWARD HOBBS**

**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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Hansard 8 June 1999

**NELLY BAY DEVELOPMENT, MAGNETIC ISLAND**

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—NPA) (6.19 p.m.) What a disgraceful performance by the Deputy Premier!

**Mr Borbidge:** The contribution of the Goss Government was an EIS announced in their sixth year of Government.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is absolutely right.

The Deputy Premier said that he found nothing. He was not looking at all. If he opened any drawer—top or bottom—or looked at any file, he would have found a lot of information. You were not even looking. You did not even look. You are a fibber. That is what you are.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Warrego will refer to the Deputy Premier by his correct title.

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. I find that remark unparliamentary and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr HOBBS:** I withdraw it.

I have some knowledge of this issue, because as the former Minister for Natural Resources I had the responsibility for the Nelly Bay development. I could not believe that it had gone on for so long. After members opposite had been in Government for six years, I became the Minister and inspected the site. A permit to occupy was issued to Nelly Bay Harbour Pty Ltd, and the Department of Natural Resources was the applicant for a Great Barrier Reef Marine Park permit to complete the works in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. What we found was a hole in the ground, an escarpment and a rocky hill that members opposite left behind. As Government members would be well aware, the project was originally titled Magnetic Quays and was quite a grandiose development.

**Mr Elder:** Now you're going to rewrite history, are you?

**Mr HOBBS:** I will tell the member exactly what happened. Some 10 years ago, it was believed that by the year 2000 the population there would be 20,000 people. However, due to delays caused by the greens and the conservationists, the company folded and in 1992 the site lease was surrendered, after which time it became an eyesore.

Magnetic Island had some serious problems. It had no safe harbour. The old jetty, which cost £6,000, was built by the Hornibrook Company in 1959-60. The Deputy Premier should have looked a bit harder in the drawer. It was a cheap job, short cuts were taken and it was not completed. The wooden pylons are cased in concrete, and some of them are only about as thick as an arm. It is not a safe harbour. There have been seven deaths on that old jetty since it was built. Hundreds of people have also been injured on the jetty. Government members want it left in place. It is not appropriate to rebuild that jetty, which is in part of the reef area. The reports from all Government sources have stated that it should not be rebuilt. Nelly Bay is a safe harbour. The green groups and the member for Townsville have argued that, during Cyclone Justin, waves broke over the quays. However, it was designed as an overtopping breakwater. Therefore, it was a safe harbour. But the job stoppers were at work.

It is the right of all communities to have a reliable health service. Medical evacuations in that area average about one a week. When boats cannot reach the jetty, they have to go to Nelly Bay,

where people have to walk in water up to their armpits to try to board them. That is what Mr Reynolds wants. We know what is going on in north Queensland. Helicopters are used, and that has been an improvement. However, any isolated island needs a good harbour. Some members opposite are trying to scuttle that.

The only remaining barrier was a minor boundary dispute in the downsized project and Federal Government approvals. That is all that was needed. Remediation of the site was impractical and a risk to the environment. The boundary and the additional EISs from the Federal Government are now okay, as are the town planning approvals. The Townsville City Council, Townsville Enterprise and the Magnetic Island community support the project. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park has approved the project. But Mr Reynolds is totally opposed to it. This development has been through more studies, appeals and processes than any other project in Queensland. The Premier's representative in north Queensland is against this project.

Time expired.

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