



Speech by

Mrs J. SHELDON

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—LP) (6.08 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to second the motion moved by the member for Gregory. Unfortunately, since Labor became the Government in this State and the member for Cook became the Minister for Transport, all forms of genuine public consultation have gone out the window. Sham processes have been adopted so that departmental requirements can be fulfilled. However, in reality people are not being listened to and their concerns and wishes are not being acted upon.

I wrote recently to the Minister and to Ove Arup, who were put in as consultants for the proposed rail/transport corridor on the Sunshine Coast. I asked if I could have a copy of all public submissions that had been submitted to the consultants. I asked the Minister for all copies of public submissions which his consultants would have given to him and any that he received himself. As an answer to both of these requests, I received a letter from someone in the FOI section of Transport who informed me that, if I wished to make an application under FOI for any information, I had to pay a fee up front.

I wrote back and said, "As a matter of urgent fact, I would like a copy of this application I made to you under FOI." The letter I received in reply stated, "If you make a request for consultants like Ove Arup, then you must pay an FOI fee." There was no mention of the request I had made to the Minister. This charade and nonsense is continuing. Of course, in the interim, time for public comment on any submissions has closed and supposedly CAMCOS is going to make the major part of its decision based on consultation with the community and the submissions put in.

I happen to know that the great majority of all submissions were against the so-called close to Caloundra/Aroona option. I think it is only fair that the people in my electorate and on the Sunshine Coast know the points of view that were put forth and know on what basis—and they have every right to ask on what basis—CAMCOS decisions are being taken for that corridor. If this is an open and accountable process, as the Minister says, then let us be open and accountable. Let us not try to stop members of Parliament finding out about important issues that relate to their electorates, which is exactly what is happening. I would think that is interfering in how members can address the concerns of their constituents.

Mr Johnson: About 5% of the people at that meeting agreed to that corridor. The 95% were discounted.

Mrs SHELDON: That is exactly right. What the former Minister for Transport, Mr Johnson, has just said is exactly right. He was at a public meeting with me at which the Minister was also present. There was an overwhelming majority who did not want this close to Caloundra/Aroona option and a very small minority did think that coming in, particularly if it went near Golden Beach, was going to be a plus.

The Minister in a media release when he announced that the EIS would actually look at the close to Caloundra corridor—that was his preferred option—said that, in fact, he might shift the line closer to Golden Beach for better access for the elderly. There was great concern within that area as to just where this rail line was going to go. So I asked the Minister if he would clarify what he meant by "shifting this line closer to Golden Beach". Of course he did not know, and that is exactly the answer I received. One has to ask: why is this continuing to happen?

There is also a question about whether this is going to be capable of carrying freight, and I know that there is genuine concern on the Sunshine Coast about such a freight proposition. Let us find out if freight is being considered. If one is going to look at an integrated transport system, which I understand we are, then I just wonder if we could find out from the Minister what consultation he has had with the Minister for State Development, as very recently it was announced that a major industrial complex will go just where the Corbould Park rail line would have gone. One would assume that, if this is going to go ahead and people are going to access this estate by transport, the Minister would want such a line to be able to carry freight, otherwise what sort of transport accessibility is there to this site?

I think the people who may be interested in developing businesses, which will create jobs on the Sunshine Coast, should be able to look at an option of a rail line through there to carry freight from that area back to the major markets and overseas, if they were exporting. So far none of that information has been available.

Time expired.
