



Speech by

Mrs E. CUNNINGHAM

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS, GLADSTONE ELECTORATE

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—IND) (10.25 a.m.): My electorate, which incorporates the Gladstone and Calliope council areas, is a dynamic region growing in both the urban and industrial sectors. Residents across the electorate not only support but also encourage development, provided that all necessary environmental controls are in place and social impacts are addressed. The development of these safeguards has occurred over a long time, with terms of reference for EISs for industrial projects now incorporating these issues, though greater weight needs to be given to social impacts.

Several issues remain outstanding in respect of a region such as ours. Because of our industrial base, decisions taken by Government can have significant implications. Affected residents have met with Ministers of the former and the current Governments to both outline these impacts and seek a whole-of-Government response.

The former Government announced the sterilisation of the oil shale fields. This ring fencing was intended irrespective of a company's interest in its development. It occurred because of the value of the resource. However, whilst it was stated that landowners over whose land the decision was made could continue to deal with their land as if the declaration was not made, the market reality is that landowners were placed at a significant disadvantage once the announcements were made, either through a demonstrable drop in the resale value of properties, a drop in collateral value or a complete withdrawal of buyer interest in the affected areas.

These landowners are seeking a just system for all. If a resource is required, even in the long term, for the public interest, the Government making that decision should also act to ameliorate the effects of that decision on directly affected landowners. Such action would not set an unsustainable precedent. Few areas in the State have developed in the way in which the Gladstone/Calliope region has. Again, landowners do not want to stifle development. However, they want and deserve to survive once Government decisions are made. Although a number of meetings have been held over the past two years, no effective decisions have been made, nor have effective strategies been put in place. I implore the Government to act on these matters to ensure a confident future for these landowners.
