



Speech by

Mr M. ROWELL

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard 27 May 1999

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
Report No. 56

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (10.18 a.m.): I support the motion moved by the member for Mooloolah. Compton's Village was a pilot project providing housing for a number of senior citizens in the Caboolture area. The pilot rental assistance initiative provided housing for low income seniors through State and Federal subsidies. The majority report fails to recognise the significance of the placement of 180 eligible tenants who could find accommodation in Compton's Village, which cost the provider some \$12m.

The Department of Housing considers that it was not procuring goods and services to which the State Purchasing Policy applied when determinations were being made of Compton's proposal. Certainly the State is providing rental assistance which diminishes over 15 years, but saying that a service was being procured is drawing a longbow.

Although tenants of Compton's are paying a higher percentage of their pension than in other accommodation, there is a difference in the range of services and lifestyle. One hundred and forty-seven tenants who came from existing public housing or waiting lists made a conscious decision to move into a facility that suited their needs. The committee spent some time at the complex, and residents had ample opportunity to approach any member of the committee to raise complaints about the cost of rent, manner of payment, subsidy from the State or any other aspect of the retirement village. Newspaper advertisements gave the public the chance to make submissions on any aspect of housing for seniors in the Brisbane statistical area. There was a formal hearing in Brisbane where contentious issues could have been raised by tenants or anybody they chose to represent them.

The majority report went into details, comparing RSL establishments close to Compton Village. A number of seniors units were visited by the committee in the assessment of accommodation and cost of rental to pensioners. The RSL units were not visited, yet featured in a comparison with Compton's in the majority report. The RSL units are run by a charitable organisation involved in many areas of fundraising. Depending on eligibility, seniors can make application to either establishment.

The majority report was not comparing apples with apples. One of the main issues raised in the majority report relates to the better value for money. The Department of Housing was approached with a proposal for a private developer to spend their money—not Government money—on a project which cost \$12m which, on the preferred interest rate, would have accrued some \$5.9m over 10 years of the period of the interest payment alone.

Time expired.
