



Speech by

Mr M. HORAN

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

Hansard 25 March 1999

TOOWOOMBA SOUTH BOYS SCHOOL

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (7.04 p.m.): A great injustice has been done to a Toowoomba business in the Government process of selling the old Toowoomba South Boys School. On 22 October 1998, this property was bought by Mr Mark Crampton, the trustee of the adjoining Holden dealership, for \$1.2m to build a new dealership with underground parking, creating new jobs for 60 people. The purchase followed extensive inquiry and investigation into the site's availability for sale and investigation of any heritage listing of the buildings by potential buyers, real estate agents, local government, valuers and solicitors. Amongst the extensive research was a building note and a Queensland Heritage Act search that clearly certified that the place was not affected by provisions of the Act.

On the day before the auction, a letter was received, including an extract from a cultural assessment by the Cultural Heritage Branch, that again showed the property had not been nominated to the Queensland Heritage Register. It went on to say that the building had cultural significance and that the Heritage Council would decide whether or not the property would be entered in the Queensland Heritage Register. Meanwhile, all financial and legal arrangements had been made by potential purchasers who were committed to the auction.

Only hours before the auction, Mr Crampton was informed that the Heritage Council was meeting the very next day. It did meet the day after the auction and decided that it had a mind to enter the place on the Queensland Heritage Register. The Queensland Heritage Council has since proceeded to the provisional register entry stage.

Departmental officers have admitted the system has not worked. What has happened is immoral, incompetent and grossly negligent, because the property could have been far less valuable or not even sold had the Heritage Council decision been made earlier and not the day after the sale. This matter needs immediate fixing.

I have spoken to the Minister for Natural Resources and the Minister for State Development. I sincerely hope that they can bring about a fair resolution. It is time that serious issues like this were fixed and that businesses that are interested in purchasing Government properties are given a clear indication of the heritage status of properties that they wish to buy. It is not right that, at a meeting the day after purchase, a decision is made that changes the whole status of the building.
