



Speech by

Mr SANTO SANTORO

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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ADULT SHOPS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—LP) (7.05 p.m.): On 22 July 1999 I tabled a petition from 2,293 constituents requesting the House to make whatever legislative amendments were necessary to give the community rights to object and appeal against the establishment or continuation of businesses considered inappropriate by the community.

The petition sought to draw to the attention of this Parliament the very strong objections which a section of my local community holds to the opening of an adult shop in a residential area. This particular adult shop is surrounded by homes within which live many young families with young children. It is located across the road from a well established and very active church which operates a popular play group and youth groups; it is located within metres of major sporting grounds, a large recreational park and walking and bicycle paths. As the father of young children who from time to time use some of the abovementioned recreational facilities, I can attest that they are extremely well patronised by local residents and visitors from other suburbs.

The products and the services provided by the adult shop are for adults only, yet as I have just stated, its location places it in an area used frequently by a large number of children, adolescents, families and elderly members of the community. In fact, a local community group which was formed subsequent to the establishment of this adult shop estimates that over 2,000 children use the nearby sporting facilities on a weekly basis.

It is the understanding of my constituents and me that the adult shop is able to operate within current State and local government guidelines. In fact, it has been put to me that the current guidelines do not distinguish one shop usage from another and, as a result of this, once a particular place is zoned by the local authority

for business use, there is no need for a new business—which often differs significantly from the previously established business—to inform the community of its establishment and desire to operate as a business in a local area. Needless to say, people living close to such businesses—and, of course, many of the visitors who come into local areas such as the one affected and who use the local recreational, sporting and religious facilities—often do make a strong and clear distinction between some different types of businesses and, in this particular case, shop usage.

It is the belief of the local community that I represent that the current town planning and zoning rules need to be changed so as to reflect these community attitudes. Representatives of my local community have, through the abovementioned petition and also through direct representations, expressed very strong objections to the situation that has arisen within my electorate and have requested that I bring this matter to the attention of the State Government and requested that the Government listen to its concerns and liaise with the Brisbane City Council to effect changes which recognise the specific use of a location for an adult shop. The intent here, of course, is that any such usage may be restricted from occurring in a residential locality and further that aspects of such shop usage, for example, its displays, access, lighting, on-site activities, etc., may be limited.

Since the tabling of the large petition I have mentioned, I have not heard anybody from Government respond to the concerns expressed within the petition by my constituents. It is my belief that Governments and councils have a responsibility to listen and to respond to community concerns and to protect those who cannot protect themselves. I make this observation as a former Minister who, from time

to time, during my time as a Minister, witnessed several petitions tabled expressing concerns about matters which were within my area of ministerial responsibility. I recall in one instance responding very directly to many people who presented this place with a petition and I recall receiving some considerable and, indeed, very favourable feedback in relation to what I had to say about their concerns.

I ask the Government to give consideration to the issues that my constituents and I have raised within this place in relation to inappropriate businesses located within residential areas and the ability of communities to appeal against such locations. I again reiterate the wishes of my constituents, these being that Governments and councils have a responsibility to listen and respond to community concerns and to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

I have been informed that recently the Brisbane City Council has requested the operators of the business in question to reapply for a licence that will allow it to conduct a business on the current premises. This has prompted my constituents to object to the granting of such a licence. Many have done so and they now hope that their concerns will be resolved by the refusal to grant such a licence. I urge the Brisbane City Council authorities to afford conclusive and favourable consideration to the representations of my constituents.

I also give notice that I intend pursuing this issue not only within this place but also with the Brisbane City Council with a view to bringing about legislative or regulatory changes which I hope will in the future address similar problems and concerns as those being experienced by my constituents today. The current review of the town plan gives ample opportunity to people in authority within the Brisbane City Council to, in fact, seek to bring down within the regulations and the ordinances those rules and regulations which will in the future enable constituents who are in the situation of the people I represent to lodge valid and conclusive objections against such land usages. I strongly recommend to the Minister for Local Government and other Ministers who have responsibility in this area of policy that I have just been outlining to take an interest in this issue and be of assistance to the people whom I represent.
