



Speech by

WARREN PITT

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Hansard 3 March 1999

ABBNEYFIELD HOUSING PROJECT

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.22 a.m.): In July last year the Government held its very first Community Cabinet meeting at Edmonton. I was pleased to attend that meeting and saw at first hand the value of having a Government that really gets out and about and listens to people's concerns.

As a result of that meeting in July, the Government has committed itself to establishing a pilot project for an Abbeyfield-style seniors housing project in Babinda. The Abbeyfield concept—already popular in Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, the ACT and Tasmania—usually involves a 10-bedroom dwelling for seniors with communal living, dining and garden areas. The Abbeyfield model also provides for an on-site housekeeper and additional rooms for people visiting residents. The Abbeyfield concept provides another housing option for our senior citizens. They are run by locally based management committees, with local community involvement being a key ingredient.

The idea of establishing Queensland's first Abbeyfield project was put to the Minister by the Babinda and District Aged Care Association at the Community Cabinet meeting in Edmonton. The Minister has since told me that he had never heard of this concept until the president of the association, Fred Lizzio, outlined it to him during a delegation at Edmonton.

The Minister did something very simple at that meeting. He listened. He listened to what Fred had to say and he immediately saw the potential in this project. That is why none of us should underestimate the importance of the Community Cabinet process.

The Abbeyfield project underlines the fact that we have a Government and a Minister for Housing who listen to what people are saying and take notice of what they want. The fact is that the Babinda and District Aged Care Association had raised this issue with previous Governments and previous Ministers but had always been given the same answer—"We don't fund those sorts of projects." Yet all it took was a few minutes with Robert Schwarten at the Edmonton Community Cabinet meeting to get the ball rolling. The Minister himself will tell us that if it had not been for that meeting at Edmonton the Babinda proposal would never have seen the light of day. It proves just how valuable the Community Cabinet process can be.

Departmental officers have been working with the Babinda and District Aged Care Association to finalise details of the project, which could cost around \$900,000. The Abbeyfield model offers security and social interaction for elderly people while respecting their independence. It is an ideal concept for small rural and regional communities such as Babinda. It will enable Babinda and district residents to stay in the town where they have lived and worked with their families and friends. Time expired.
