



Speech by

**Hon. R. SCHWARTEN**

**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

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Hansard 3 October 2000

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Howard Smith Wharf Site; Removal of Makeshift Shelters**

**Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton— ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing) (10.19 a.m.), by leave: I wish to advise the House that action is being taken today to remove people occupying land at the top of the State Government owned Howard Smith wharf site adjacent to the Story Bridge. The erection of makeshift shelters on the site, the occupation of those shelters and so-called caves under the footpath, as well as the consequent presence of rubbish and other material, has given rise to complaints from nearby residents. Because of the peculiar physical nature of the site, I believe there is also a personal safety issue for people choosing to live there.

The advice available to me is that the people concerned are occupying land which is the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council. The council maintains that this is not the case. As both Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, I am not interested in debating such a question. I have asked the Department of Housing to do all it can to find suitable accommodation for those wanting it. Such accommodation will be made available to those willing to accept such an offer.

Officers of the department have been working in conjunction with the local group, Community Access and Support Service, to assist those people wanting alternative accommodation. I have asked that this matter be resolved today. I have also asked the Department of Public Works to remove structures on the site and seal up the caves to prevent further occupation.

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