



Speech by

**Mr P. PURCELL**

**MEMBER FOR BULIMBA**

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Hansard 1 August 2001

**HOUSING DEPARTMENT, BRISBANE SOUTH AREA OFFICE**

**Mr PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (7.28 p.m.): Last Wednesday I attended the official opening of the new Department of Housing area office for the Brisbane South region with my parliamentary colleagues, the Honourable Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, Robert Swarten, and the member for Mansfield, Phil Reeves. The Brisbane South area office, formerly at Stones Corner, has recently been relocated to Logan Road, Buranda. The new location is now more centrally located for providing services for the whole of the Brisbane South area and is situated right next to the Buranda railway station and is on the main bus route, ensuring good public transport for clients.

The Brisbane South area office manages more than 5,400 properties, including 669 households in my electorate of Bulimba. The Brisbane South region includes the inner and near-city suburbs south of the Brisbane River and extends to the suburbs of Rocklea, Sunnybank Hills, Runcorn, Carindale, Morningside and Cannon Hill.

As many of the Brisbane South area office clients access hospitals in the area, such as the Mater, the Princess Alexandra Hospital, the Greenslopes Private Hospital and QE II, the Brisbane South area office serves a wide range of clients. There is a high proportion of clients who have a mental illness. There is also a high demand for purpose-built dwellings for people with disabilities. This growing demand for specialist housing has been inflated as the Howard government continues to shift away from providing capital investment in housing to providing rental assistance for people to live in private rental accommodation. As we know, the private rental market rarely caters for tenants with special needs because of the additional costs involved in providing modified housing.

To address these new challenges and to ensure that the Department of Housing is meeting the needs of all tenants, the department is establishing working partnerships with private industry, the community sector and other government agencies to tackle the systemic issues that contribute to housing need. Tenant participation groups play a vital role in providing support for housing tenants and representing tenants in negotiation with the department at a local level to ensure better outcomes for clients. The tenants group that represents tenants on Brisbane's south side is Scatter. I would like to thank them for their hard work, particularly the President, Bev Shaffer, and other representatives who attended the opening last week, Jewel Murphy and Glenis Dart. I have a copy of that photograph that was taken of us together, and I can say that it came out pretty good.

The government is committed to efficient service delivery. Nearly 30 Department of Housing staff will work from the new premises. The new office provides excellent client reception facilities, including private interview rooms. It features a wheelchair ramp to facilitate disabled access and provides a better working environment for the dedicated staff of the Brisbane South area office. I have to say that I have had a lot to do with that office over many years. I have found that the staff of that office have certainly looked after their clients as best they can. They are a dedicated group of people. Whenever they are given an opportunity, they will always help out.

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