



Speech by

PETER LAWLOR

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

Hansard 2 May 2001

SCHIZOPHRENIA FELLOWSHIP, GOLD COAST

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (7.04 p.m.): I draw to the attention of the House the problems encountered by the Schizophrenia Fellowship on the Gold Coast in its efforts to establish a clubhouse at Southport. This project is designed to assist people with a mental illness, their carers and health professionals. It is based on a model proven for over 50 years to be of worth and which is presently operating in 15 other countries. It aims to empower people to achieve a better quality of life in a non-institutionalised environment.

The fellowship's efforts to establish this very worthwhile and essential community project have been frustrated and, indeed, jeopardised by the irrational, obstructive and bloody-minded behaviour of one councillor on the Gold Coast City Council, Councillor Crichlow. In 1998 an application was made for funding under the federal government's Centenary of Federation Community Projects Program, and \$100,000 was granted. The federal member for Moncrieff obtained a verbal indication that council would provide land for the project at Owen Park, and application was made for a lease. Members of the fellowship were told by Councillor Crichlow that they were not wanted in Owen Park, and the efforts to frustrate and delay the project began. When the application for a lease was considered, Councillor Crichlow called for a management plan for Owen Park. There were already at least six other organisations at the park and, as a result, the fellowship lost an opportunity to purchase a suitable house. This was one of three similar opportunities lost due to delay.

In October 2000 council approved a site for the Schizophrenia Fellowship at Owen Park. However, in an effort to further frustrate the project, Councillor Crichlow had a half basketball court constructed on the site. The basketball court is illegal as it is located under powerlines, which the Schizophrenia Fellowship agreed to relocate at a cost of \$15,000. This person, who pays lip-service to openness and accountability, did this without advising council. When council was made aware of the half court, it censured Councillor Crichlow and resolved that the half court be removed.

As usual, Councillor Crichlow conducts her campaign through the media. The *Weekend Bulletin* of 17 February carried photos of teenagers allegedly protesting over the loss of the basketball court. I have been there on six occasions, including during school holidays, and I have never seen anyone there. Further protests and delays are expected, and if this project is not completed by the end of the year the funding will be lost for an important project that would be of great value to the community.

The fellowship has tried to keep a low profile throughout this sorry saga and has chosen not to respond to the many inflammatory, discriminatory and misleading statements made publicly and through the media. Councillor Crichlow's irrational and vindictive campaign has delayed and jeopardised the project and put the fellowship through unnecessary inconvenience and expense.
