



Speech by

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Hansard 5 December 2001

MOBILE PHONE TOWERS

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (7.16 p.m.): For some time now, there has been a great deal of concern in my electorate, especially in the suburbs of Chelmer, Graceville and Sherwood, that a mobile telecommunications tower will be constructed at a number of sites in our local community. I made a very clear commitment that I would fight such a development and I am continuing to fight this battle on behalf of the residents in my area.

I have actively sought the assurance of all mobile telecommunication companies operating in Queensland that they are not seeking currently to construct any more mobile phone towers in suburbs such as Chelmer, Graceville, Sherwood, St Lucia, Fig Tree Pocket, Indooroopilly or Taringa. We had a number of fairly major concerns earlier this year in particular when it was suggested by, I think, One.Tel that the marvellous Graceville Memorial Park is a suitable location for a mobile phone tower, which my community found totally unacceptable.

Unfortunately, at the end of the day it is the federal government that has the power to act on this matter. It is the federal government that has the capacity to amend the federal Telecommunications Act 1997 to give either the state government or even local councils some capacity to resist attempts by mobile phone companies to erect mobile phone towers like mushrooms. Currently, neither the state government nor local councils have any real capacity to resist attempts by mobile phone companies to construct a tower. I understand that under the federal act the only issue that could be considered would be some manner of compensation if it was one's personal property that the tower was to be constructed upon.

Sadly, a lot of these companies feel that they have the right to construct towers wherever they want to put them in residential areas. It is even sadder that the federal government feels that they should be given this right. I highlight in particular the fact that the residents of Chelmer, Graceville and Sherwood have bought houses in that area in good faith. I think where possible governments should give them the opportunity to look after their families without fear that a mobile phone tower will be constructed in their street. These suburbs have not only four schools but also a number of preschools, day care centres and school care groups. They would all be affected directly by any such development. These local children have every right to grow up in a healthy environment. I implore the federal government to act now to protect the health of residents in all areas where they are at risk of becoming neighbours of mobile phone towers.

In conclusion, it would be appropriate for the telecommunication companies to give a commitment that they have no plans to build these towers in my community.
