



Speech by

CAROLYN MALE

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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Maleny

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (11.56 a.m.): This morning I rise to put on record the issues facing the township of Maleny. It is a difficult time for Maleny as it struggles to retain its rural identity and its strong sense of community. The four main issues as I see them are the water pipeline, the proposed supermarket developments, the Master Planned Community and the lack of community facilities.

At the outset I need to say that the Maleny community, and especially those taking a leading role on these issues, are not antidevelopment. The whole philosophy that community members expound is sustainable development. Further to this, they also ask that those in charge of planning for our communities think outside the square and look at opportunities to trial new methods of reducing our impact on the environment.

Originally, Caloundra council decided to build a pipeline from Landers Shute to Maleny—supposedly to ensure a water supply to the existing town residents. Some people believe it is actually to allow large-scale residential development to occur in the future, which would turn Maleny from being a community into a dormitory suburb for Brisbane and Caloundra.

The council-commissioned Brown and Root report did not look at all options and certainly did not look at sustainable measures such as raising the weir, installing water tanks or recycling water. The Maleny Water Group prepared its own report, which contrasted and in some cases contradicted the council's report, but it has been ignored and, even worse, denigrated.

The Local Government Minister asked the Maleny Water Group to demonstrate community support. In just four weeks, over 2,000 local people signed a petition asking for the government not to approve the subsidy until a comprehensive study is undertaken which identifies all water options and takes into consideration sustainability factors. The Local Government Minister then asked council to take the petitioners' views into consideration and look again at the entire water pipeline proposal. Council, at best, undertook a very cursory public consultation process, with a cynical reformation of the Citizens Advisory Group, whose requests and advice were summarily ignored. I am exceedingly disappointed with Mayor Don Aldous for his lack of leadership on this important issue and with Councillor Pauline Clayton for her total disregard of the Maleny community's wishes. Council has finally started a sustainable integrated water plan study, and I would ask that this be done prior to any further work being done on the pipeline. It may well turn out that the pipeline is required, but until all options are studied an informed decision cannot be made.

Town planning concerns, and specifically the proposal for two new supermarkets, are worrying residents. Maleny is a rural town whose main street is the hub of shopping and social life. The shops are on the whole independent, family-run small businesses and community-run cooperatives, which do their best to supply everything that we could possibly need. Rod and Narelle Thamm's drapery and menswear stores, Matthew and Denise Howard's newsagency, Rob and Sam Outridge's IGA supermarket and other businesses hire local people and are part of the community. They give their staff latitude to help out with community events and they donate goods to fundraisers. Quite frankly, I do not think there has been one community fundraiser that the IGA has not provided major prizes or sponsorship for. Anyone who thinks Coles or Woolworths would offer the same level of support should think again.

Poor planning decisions from the late 1980s are to blame, but it does not appear that any steps have been taken to rectify the problem. Maybe if the Caloundra council had actually done its IPA

planning on time, things would be different. It is hard to speculate, but I encourage the council to take the opportunity to re-examine the DCP.

The master planned community is worrying a lot of people. I am not looking forward to having the council as a developer, because I am not sure that it can be trusted. What started off as a plan for a golf course has turned into a mammoth housing development with a community precinct as the carrot being dangled to allow the full-scale development of the green hills at the entrance to Maleny. The council is trying to do some community planning, but it is not addressing the issues and it is certainly not answering all the questions. That is not good enough.

Finally, Maleny is suffering from a lack of community facilities. The closing down of the scout building, which housed both the Scouts and the Maleny flexi-school, has started a process whereby the community is trying to work out a way of accommodating a number of community organisations, especially those that are directed at helping our youth. Now, the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre is at risk. This centre was officially opened by Mayor Don Aldous and me. I have personally asked the mayor to step in and help by getting the council to take on the trusteeship of the land, but he has not been able to do so.

The local councillor has said that the council does not see that there is a need for any more community land in Maleny. She must be walking around with her eyes closed. To defend her decision, the councillor even told me that the council had a policy of not taking on any more trusteeships for land. That was simply not true. If the council wanted to, it could take it on. How much would it cost? Seventy-five dollars a year!

The neighbourhood centre is a base for so many community programs—Commonwealth, state and local government projects. It provides counselling and emergency relief, helps victims of domestic violence—all of these things. I call on the council to get in behind it and help save the neighbourhood centre.

I understand that sometimes elected representatives have to support policies or proposals that are unpalatable to parts of the community. But the overriding consideration should always be whether or not the decision is for the greater good. The community ambulance cover scheme is an example of this. However, this council, and especially the local councillor, have consistently shown their complete and utter disregard for the community's concerns and their unwillingness to meaningfully consult with the community. I call on the Caloundra council to change its approach to making decisions that impact on Maleny, to please consult, to please listen and to not let the heart of Maleny be ripped out.