



Speech by

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Hansard 18 March 2004

BUSHLAND, GLADSTONE

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (5.55 p.m.): I rise to speak about a block of land in Philip Street in my electorate that has for a number of years now been a source of controversy. The community, particularly those who live in close proximity to the land, wishes to see the entire block kept as natural bushland. It has to be acknowledged that its past use included animal husbandry, but over quite a number of years it has reverted back to natural bushland. People see it as an important lung in the city.

In the past I have had quite a bit of dealing with this land, particularly with the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing's departmental staff to the point at which at one stage we had an agreement that part of the land would be used for aged care and low-cost housing and the rest would be kept in its natural state. I remain supportive of that view. However, the majority of the people in the community who did respond to the issue wanted to see the land kept in its natural state. Prior to the last election I said I would support them in their call.

Although he would not gift the land to the council for open space purposes, the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing generously offered a deal to the Gladstone City Council in relation to the purchase of the land for half the market value and an arrangement for the payment of that land and the use of that money for public housing. Unfortunately, Gladstone City Council rejected that offer and we are now back to the situation where the Minister for Housing has stated that he will make the land available for public auction.

I do not blame the minister for losing patience. It has been controversial and it has been elongated in terms of negotiations. I seek leave to table a letter from Maria Mohrholz in relation to the land.

Leave granted.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: In that letter she asks the parliament of Queensland, the minister and the Premier to allow more time to negotiate a solution in terms of the community and that block of land. The Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing has said that it will be made available for auction or sale in the first week of April.

A community group whose representative is Mr David Caffin is looking at ways of funding the purchase of that land with council as the conduit because the government needs a recognised entity to be the purchaser of that block of land. But he and the community do not believe that in the short time available they will have the opportunity to approach all of the industries that they are hoping will co-fund the purchase of the land for it to be kept as open space.

The purpose of my speech in the Adjournment debate tonight is to seek some additional time from the Premier and the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing to allow the community to be able to work on some options in keeping the land for open space.