



Speech by

Mark McArdle

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (11.03 p.m.): Many of the current problems faced by our great state have as part of their genesis affordable housing. In times gone by families, though finding it difficult, had the capacity to have their own home, albeit as owner or renter. The fact of having your own home at an affordable price meant there were funds to meet the day-to-day expenses of the family, and that is the important point—to have funds available to meet those expenses. Those days are rapidly disappearing. There are many reasons for this and at the moment they are not relevant.

One consequence, however, has been an escalation in property values and in rental prices. These figures have risen so quickly and by so much that the elderly, the young, young families and those who are disadvantaged cannot buy their home or rent a residence without serious impacts on the family's cash flow. This cash flow loss impacts on the capacity of the family to meet those ordinary expenses with, on occasion, sad consequences.

This is a situation that exists throughout Queensland, including the Sunshine Coast. Recognising this, the Sunshine Coast Housing Network took the initiative earlier this year and established the project titled 'Whatever Happened to the House that Jack Built?' The project has the following inclusive aims: firstly, to establish workable models of affordable housing; secondly, to establish who in the community can assist the process; and, thirdly, to develop options.

The Housing Network employed consultants, held six forums across the whole of the Sunshine Coast and held a large workshop on Tuesday, 21 September 2004 to establish the project findings. A task force has now been established to support the project findings. A second workshop is to be held in November 2004. I am honoured to say that I have been asked to attend the workshop.

The point, however, is that the project as a whole highlights a belief I hold myself, that is, that a community can take charge of its own affairs and, as a whole, can achieve a goal or a result. In modern society governments are essential, but too many people forget the power of their community. I am proud to see the whole of the Sunshine Coast working together to tackle a critical matter. More issues can be dealt with by actions such as this, and I hope to see more resolutions achieved by this process. I cannot tell members if this will finally resolve the problem of housing, but I know that if we can harness the power and determination of the Queensland community there is nothing this great state cannot achieve.