



Speech by

Neil Roberts

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Hansard Tuesday, 18 May 2004

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (3.12 p.m.): As a member with a fully functioning university in my electorate, I have a direct interest in ensuring that the accommodation interests of students, and many of my constituents, are protected. I am fortunate to have the Australian Catholic University in my electorate, which nationally has about 11,500 students. The Banyo campus has just under 2,700 students. As an aside, the ACU, particularly in its business teaching and nursing courses, really focuses on an ethical approach to business. I commend it for that. It is one of the major focuses of the courses that it runs. With respect to indigenous education, the ACU has a very strong commitment to indigenous education through its indigenous unit, Weemala. It nationally has 270 students and 128 of those are at the Banyo campus.

This legislation seeks to correct an unintended consequence of the recent passing of the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act, which in itself sought to protect the more vulnerable members of our community from exploitation, mainly in areas such as boarding houses, hostels and aged care rental complexes. The act unintentionally covered room-only student accommodation with the potential to impose significant and unnecessary costs on providers of this accommodation. I think that it is important to say—and other speakers have probably said this—that the removal of this accommodation from the act does not disadvantage students as further amendments ensure that the Residential Services (Accommodation) Act preserves the rights and obligations of students who access independently operated student accommodation services. Also, those students who access residential tenancies in the open rental market will also still have the protection of the Residential Tenancies Act. In closing, this bill is good, practical legislation to correct an unintended consequence of previous legislation. Accordingly, I commend the bill to the House.