



Speech by

**Liz Cunningham**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

Hansard Thursday, 2 November 2006

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## **INFRASTRUCTURE, COMPULSORY ACQUISITIONS**

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (9.08 pm): An article in today's *Courier-Mail* states that a water official allegedly told a Kandanga grandmother that she should 'go into an old people's home' if she did not like the compensation offered for her property, which is wanted for the proposed Mary River dam. The article states further—

When she protested, Mrs Randle said she was told by the same official that she could pool her finances with neighbour and friend, Tom Logan, to buy one house and move in together.

I think any member reading that article would feel a great deal of sympathy and a degree of anger at anyone who would give that sort of advice to a person, particularly to an elderly person who has been put in such a position.

But it is not an isolated incident. In my electorate a number of developments have impacted on residents, such as the purchase of land at Targinni not only by the Department of State Development but also by the Coordinator-General and, more recently, Queensland Rail talking to landowners who will be affected by the rail loop and duplication into the port.

Whilst I am sure that the ministers would not have this same attitude, because in the article in today's *Courier-Mail* the Deputy Premier expressed her concern about these sorts of statements, I have noticed that there are those within departments who probably fail—and I am being kind—to understand the depth of impact compulsory acquisition has on landowners, and their dealings with landowners are at times totally insensitive—and I am being kind. In Yarwun-Targinnie people were offered valuations by the government valuer that were subjective at best. One objected to the valuation put on a shed, and the valuer said to that person, 'I've looked at your farm and you don't need a shed this big.' That is not the job of a valuer. The valuer's job is to value what is there, not what they, as valuers, think should be there.

More recently, there are a couple of old established residents whose houses will be compulsorily acquired by Queensland Rail for the rail duplication. At the first visit by Queensland Rail representatives, each of the couples' houses had every room measured and a comment was passed about the modest condition of the houses, and it was not put as politely as that. These couples are incredibly upset. They have not been dealt with sensitively. It is critically important that departmental officers, whoever they are and whatever department they are from, deal with residents going through compulsory acquisitions or partial acquisitions of properties with sensitivity, with dignity and with the recognition that they are being imposed upon for the greater good of the community but that they are people who deserve respect.