



Speech by

Robert Messenger

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Friday, 9 June 2006

MIRIAM VALE SHIRE COUNCIL

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (5.08 pm): Earlier today I tabled a statutory declaration from Jo Gillies, architect, regarding a very serious matter involving alleged misconduct by the CEO of the Miriam Vale shire. As previously stated, I have written to the CMC, Ombudsperson, the local government minister and Miriam Vale Shire Council asking that an investigation be carried out as soon as possible. Tonight I also ask that the CEO of Miriam Vale shire be stood aside pending the results of this investigation. I do not do so lightly, but these are very serious allegations.

I table a letter from registered nurse Cheryl Lowe, who writes to me about the pending sale of the St John Ambulance hall at Welcome Creek, a township in my electorate of Burnett. Cheryl and the majority of my community oppose the sale of the St John Hall at Welcome Creek.

I have spoken before in this chamber about this issue. It is a valuable community asset owned and paid for wholly and solely by my community, including the land, which was donated, the hall itself and \$18,000 in cash which was raised for the maintenance, repair and upgrade of the facility. Tonight I ask that the St John Ambulance board reinvestigate this proposed sale, consider the considerable community outrage and stop the sale. The community has held meetings with the CEO and explained their history and needs and—this is according to Mrs Lowe—when confronted by community members the CEO agreed in 2005 to approve the refurbishment plans if they were submitted within six months. The plans were submitted within four months and he did not even acknowledge them. He changed his mind and again said that he was selling the property.

The community is now concerned that there may have been some financial mismanagement at the St John Ambulance in Queensland and that this may be the reason why the hall is being sold to raise the money. Last week Mr Errol Carey, the St John Ambulance Queensland CEO, had the hall valued by a local real estate agent in order to sell the property. The community is devastated and has asked Cheryl to forward to me on its behalf a letter explaining the situation, which has been done. It has also requested to seek help from our Premier, Mr Peter Beattie, to save this community asset. The property was, as I said earlier, donated, developed and maintained by a rural community. St John Ambulance Queensland has not contributed any financial assistance to the property and St John Ambulance Queensland also holds right now the \$18,000 raised by the community to refurbish this hall.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 8 June 2006, from Cherrie Lowe to Mr Rob Messenger MP relating to St John Ambulance Hall—Welcome Creek.

Time expired.