



Speech by

Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

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STAFFORD ELECTORATE, DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING LAND

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (12.15 pm): During this morning's ministerial statement the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport tabled his determination on a long-running controversy in my electorate. For well over 10 years 6.4 hectares of government owned land at 818 Rode Road in Stafford Heights has been subject to uncertainty fuelled by some understandable NIMBYism and a lot of politics. Today we have a clear determination about the future of the site and, frankly, a win-win outcome for the community as a whole.

Blue Care's aged care and other facilities will assist in addressing an outstanding need on our part of the north side. With 16.7 per cent aged over 70 years, my constituents have been calling for more facilities which provide opportunities for graduated care options. The minister's approval will provide 192 general nursing care beds alongside 36 serviced apartments and 164 assisted living units. Equally, these numbers are down on the original proposal which was rejected by Brisbane City Council. A reduction of 64 beds, a halving of the number of apartments and 16 fewer units means that the genuine concerns of many immediate neighbours to the site have been addressed. The significant reduction of the site's gross floor area down from 70 per cent to 60 per cent goes to underscore that local residents's concerns about the scale of the development and the probable traffic impacts have indeed been heard and dealt with.

I thank all of the local residents, both those who supported and those who opposed the Blue Care facility, for being involved in an important issue for the whole of the north side. Knowing their positions on this site well, I am sure that some local residents will not be happy with the outcome. However, I am equally sure that Blue Care will be disappointed about some of the conditions. While the site has been partly cleared and has been set aside for development for many, many decades—originally planned for the Chermside West state school—concerns have been raised about the environmental impact of development. Looking at it quickly, the minister's decision commits Blue Care to address key environmental concerns by reducing the building footprint to well less than 50 per cent of the site and re-establishing the missing link to the much-loved and widely valued Raven Street Reserve. This is a balanced positive outcome that I am sure the majority of the community will support.

Unfortunately, the controversy over the site has the fingerprints of opportunistic Liberal politicians all over it. Some 13 years ago they opposed the proposal which included public housing. Some 10 years ago the then Liberal housing minister and the local Liberal councillor supported private residential development of 100 per cent of the site while not telling the locals who had supported their earlier campaign. More recently, the Liberals in council have broken their election commitment to buy the land off the state. At the same time, they have supported clear-felling of land a few hundred metres along Rode Road. Over the same period state Labor has remained honest with the community and sought a good outcome for a range of competing interests. The completed sale will now allow the Department of Housing to inject much-needed funds into the north side for affordable housing, and I thank the minister for housing for his continued commitment throughout this controversy.

I welcome the decision and I look forward to seeing more local residents enjoying their advanced years in their own communities, maintaining their social networks and accessing local services. I also

place on record the outstanding commitment of the former member for Stafford, Terry Sullivan, in support of his constituents, particularly his aged constituents and their families who are quite concerned about how they would be able to age gracefully in their own communities. He stood up for his constituents with great passion, and I am sure that that is recognised by the whole House.

Mr REEVES: He was extremely passionate about it.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: He was extremely passionate about it. I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Mansfield. I place on record my support for the decision made by the minister. It provides a win-win outcome for the whole community. I hope that the community will acknowledge it.