



Speech by

Terry Rogers

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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PUBLIC HOUSING

Mr ROGERS (Redcliffe—Lib) (10.14 pm): Last year, just before Christmas, I was approached by a group of distressed public housing residents whose security screen doors had been removed from their units by the housing department. During a routine maintenance inspection and without warning, residents' screen doors were removed as they did not comply with fire door regulations. Some of the residents in the block of 20 units have resided at Klingner Road for 12 years. They have now been instructed to keep their back doors, which are deemed to be 'fire doors', closed.

It is obvious that the units are designed to use the back door for access, air flow and ventilation. Removal of these screen doors is contradictory and ludicrous. The government decision has left my constituents with limited ventilation and limited natural lighting. Considering that most of the residents are elderly, one questions the logic of residents being forced into this sort of change in the peak of summer.

At the same time that these Redcliffe residents are being locked in their homes, the Beattie Labor government is encouraging aged people to open their windows and doors for ventilation. The government has suggested costly alternatives, such as air conditioning, which is a slap in the face given that the residents cannot afford to maintain it.

After I made representations, deadlocks and peepholes were installed in the rear doors for security. That is some improvement. Since then, another bandaid solution has been applied. A large, window sized hole has been cut in the bottom of each door and a vent installed. Residents now have a big vent in their back door. If a fire develops, the vent is supposed to close. We will know, if there is a fire. However, this has frustrated residents further because it does not provide adequate ventilation and it does not allow residents to close the vent when they choose. Removal of the screen doors is an unacceptable solution. As one resident has said, it is bureaucracy gone mad. This is not security; it is a death sentence.

I call on the government to give back their screen doors and to provide suitable solutions which suit the residents' lifestyles. The screen doors had allowed for good ventilation, and without them these homes have become uninhabitable. The inadequate efforts of the government to alleviate this situation have failed. The government has its priorities wrong when it comes to public housing. Considering the growing public housing waiting list in Queensland, it is surprising that the government is focusing on petty regulations. The Labor government would rather waste time picking on residents about screen doors than finding real solutions for Queenslanders.

The Labor government's lack of planning is appalling and is reflected in every aspect of the Public Service. Removing screen doors from public housing due to fire door regulations after 12 years is unacceptable. The government is responsible for providing real solutions and not bandaid, short-term explanations. I suggest that the government consider taking advice from an architect or design professional to find a suitable solution that will not affect access or ventilation to these homes.

The people of Redcliffe deserve better than this. In fact, the people of Queensland are entitled to a government with the right priorities. One priority on this side of the chamber is rail to Redcliffe. Again, I have not missed an opportunity. Until I have a ticket for that train, members will continue to hear from me. Do not forget our rail to Redcliffe.