



Speech by

Peter Lawlor

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

Hansard Thursday, 8 March 2007

JIM DONALDSON PLACE

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (6.11 pm): It was my great pleasure to represent the minister for public works and housing, Robert Swarten, on 16 January this year at the opening of a public housing complex at Government Road in the electorate of Southport. The complex was named Jim Donaldson Place in recognition of a local identity, Jim Donaldson, who has given many years of service to the community housing organisations on the Gold Coast and also for his outstanding service to the St Vincent de Paul Society in the Gold Coast region. I had no hesitation in recommending Jim to the minister as deserving of the highest recognition in the Gold Coast community. Jim has a strong commitment to social justice and social housing issues. This commitment has always been demonstrated through his work with the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Gold Coast Housing Co.

Jim initially became involved with the St Vincent de Paul Society in 1983. In 1986 Jim became a committee member of Majella House, a domestic violence refuge on the Gold Coast. In 1992, Jim became the first chairman of the Community Rent Scheme on the Gold Coast, and in 1996 he was elected president of the Gold Coast Housing Co., a position he held for 10 years.

I believe in naming public buildings after local identities who have made a significant contribution to the community. It is one way that the contribution can be recognised and noted for future generations. For Jim Donaldson Place the state government provided almost \$6.3 million for the purchase of the land and the construction of 25 units as part of the Department of Housing's community managed housing program. This program provides funding for the purchase or construction and furnishing of properties for use as accommodation for low-income earners who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with an emphasis on single people who are socially marginalised.

Tenants at Jim Donaldson Place will benefit from its close proximity to public transport, shops and medical centres. The complex will be managed by the Gold Coast Housing Co., the biggest community housing provider on the Gold Coast and one of the largest in the state. The company currently manages more than 200 properties under a range of programs. Housing delivered by community organisations is playing an increasingly important role in providing for the housing needs of the most vulnerable people in our community.

The investment that the state government has made in Jim Donaldson Place adds to the more than \$58 million spent on public housing and housing related services in the Southport electorate since 1998. That does not include the \$15 million announced yesterday by the minister which goes to the Gold Coast Housing Co. I also congratulate the Gold Coast City Council for agreeing to contribute \$3 million over the same period to the Gold Coast Housing Co. This government leads a concerted effort to reduce the incidence of homelessness on the Gold Coast.