



Speech by

Rosemary Menkens

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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YUNGABA

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (10.01 pm): I rise to speak about a magnificent publicly owned historic building, Yungaba at Kangaroo Point, that is currently subject to a development approval that may see this building transformed into privately owned luxury apartments for 10 owners.

In 1884 the Queensland government acquired land at Kangaroo Point to create a facility where immigrants could be housed as they came in from overseas. In 1887, the current building named Yungaba was completed. It was a very stylish Italianate building and a magnificent example of the architecture of that era. Yungaba has had a variety of uses over the years ranging from housing immigrants on their arrival to Queensland, an employment agency, a refuge for the destitute, a reception centre for troops returning from the Boer War and a military hospital during the First and Second World Wars. A particularly historic time was during the Depression in the 1930s when it became the headquarters for the project team that built the Jubilee Bridge, which of course we now know as the Story Bridge. It has served various purposes and was well known for its concerts and parties showcasing Queensland's culture.

This 120-year-old building has been and still is a significant public place, as well as being heritage listed in 1988. It has a magnificent history which I would encourage all members to read on the Yungaba Action Group's web site. This splendid building stands in a large, well-kept lawn and garden, one of the few untouched green areas left in Kangaroo Point. There is an enormous tide of public opinion and support to preserve this building in its present state for the benefit of the Queensland public and these concerned citizens are led by the untiring efforts of the Yungaba Action Group.

The Yungaba Action Group opposes the sale of this building and the surrounding land to private developers as it contravenes two cabinet decisions in 1997 and 2000 that endorsed the redevelopment of Yungaba as a multicultural centre and immigration museum. The action group is lobbying government to stop the sale process that is underway, to raise public awareness of what is occurring and to rally public support for the redevelopment that was previously agreed upon. This has been a public facility for 120 years and has an enormous historic value and meaning in many people's families, and I certainly fully support the actions of these good people.

Yungaba is subject to a development approval and the preferred developers are Australand. Questions are being asked about the suitability of this particular development group and the appropriateness of this group with respect to allegations of corrupt connections with disgraced West Australian Premier Brian Burke.

Yungaba is a magnificent historic precinct, and I call on the Premier and the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism to heed the calls of the Yungaba Action Group to preserve this building as a publicly owned facility and preserve it with its historic tapestry for future generations. The current proposal to sell this off and redevelop this whole area for financial gain is simply another sleazy Beattie government grab for money.