



Speech by

Dr Alex Douglas

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

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GOLD COAST PARKLANDS

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (9.19 pm): Most showgrounds are valued very highly by their community, council and government. The land is usually held as deed in trust which for many is better than freehold land. But this has not stopped this rapacious, asset-grabbing state government from announcing last week that the Parklands show would close in 2013 and there would be an 8,000-person high-density ecovillage built on its site. No new site has been allocated for the show society and other groups. To leave the show society and others empty handed, with nothing to offer all their exhibitors and horse lovers, is disgraceful.

Parklands, which recently hosted the Inter Dominion Trotting Championships, has already lost its greyhound track. If closed, we will lose one of the best harness racing tracks in Queensland and one of the top five in Australia. If Parklands is lost, there are only two other major harness racing tracks left in Queensland. Big Day Out, Parklife and Good Vibrations will relocate to New South Wales because there is no comparable alternative venue in South-East Queensland, turning away all other large tourist-attracting festivals.

Furthermore, to build a village of 8,000 people immediately next door to the new Gold Coast University Hospital makes no sense. Hospitals need clear space on all sides, particularly when there are 1,000-plus beds at Parklands on site, with a 750-bed general and maternity public hospital and a 400-bed private hospital, which also includes a children's hospital.

The ecovillage will be in breach of local planning laws and will require ministerial intervention for redevelopment as a 'site of special state significance'. As such, the government cannot then claim exception from the council infrastructure charges of \$200 million, as the government had done with the Gold Coast University Hospital. Ratepayers had to foot the bill for the hospital infrastructure charges. So the big question is: are ratepayers going to pay for another round of imposed infrastructure charges incurred by the state government for the ecovillage?

There are better alternative sites for the 2018 Commonwealth Games village proposals than Parklands. What is the government planning to do with the existing master planned 42-hectare block adjoining the Griffith University along Olsen Avenue and Smith Street? Did it ever occur to the Premier that this site is planned for the purpose, and has been so since 1996? The Premier should withdraw her demands. The Parklands site must be retained as it is. Athletes can be housed closer to roads and services.

Nick Nichols was spot-on in his article 'Behind Parklands sham' in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on 8 September 2010. He stated 'This is a sham,' and 'Effectively, it is just another government asset sale.' I table the article.

Tabled paper: Article in Gold Coast Bulletin, dated 8 September 2010, by Nick Nichols titled 'Behind Parklands sham' [[2998](#)].

Gold Coast city must have an event precinct with good road access and good public transport. Smith Street and the light rail delivers this requirement. The Gold Coast is the sixth largest city in Australia, so how can the government just keep ripping out the heart of our arts, culture and sport and close down

this major venue—our Gold Coast showground at Parklands? The capacity and functionality of Parklands is what sets us apart from all other regional areas. The Gold Coast needs the showgrounds at Parklands and we will fight to keep it.

Well-known show ring announcer Angus Lane, who travels Australia announcing at over 60 shows including the Royal Easter Show in Sydney, says that Parklands is the best showground in Australia, and we need to keep it.