



Speech by

Glen Elmes

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Hansard Tuesday, 20 February 2007

COOLUM AMBULANCE STATION

Mr ELMES (Noosa—Lib) (9.51 pm): I wish to raise the issue of the chosen site for the proposed new Coolum ambulance station. Concerns have been put to me that the current site does not comply under the Coolum Land Use and Transport Study and, what is worse, it is too far removed from the closest access point to the Sunshine Motorway and will be immediately opposite residences on the adjacent hillside and housing estates. The QAS originally announced that the station would be built opposite the existing Woolworths complex on South Coolum Road.

What concerns me is that the QAS has said that it based its decision on the new road network as set out in the Coolum Land Use and Transport Study, which shows a road from South Coolum Road directly onto the motorway. Quite possibly, the QAS was incorrectly advised when it purchased the land, because whilst the site in question was deemed to be compliant with the Land Use and Transport Study, this road link does not appear on a development application currently sitting before Maroochy council.

If the QAS had conducted a thorough investigation prior to its purchase of the site, it would have discovered that the site is part of newly designated land under the urban footprint of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. As such, it has no designated land use other than rural. The consequence is that, if the state government elects to build on the site, it then elects to give the land a designated use and thereby influence all future use. Building on this site will create a precedent that could be used in the Planning and Environment Court, allowing developers to determine the future use of the entire length of disused cane farm land along South Coolum Road. I do not believe that that is fair or honourable.

If the state government goes ahead on the proposed site, it will be in direct conflict with the principle behind the South East Queensland Regional Plan and lead to a flow-on effect of undesirable commercial and industrial development on unused cane land in residential areas. Therefore, I request that the minister investigate the basis upon which the decision to purchase this particular site was made. It is not just important but essential that the government's decision-making processes are based on a correct premise and are open and transparent to scrutiny.

The most important factor to be considered in this matter is the saving of lives. We all know that seconds count when an ambulance is in response mode, as it can mean the difference between life and death. There is no time to waste and none to spare. Therefore, I urge the Minister for Emergency Services to immediately review the decision and locate the new Coolum ambulance station to a more suitable site.

In closing, I congratulate and thank the *Coolum Advertiser* and, in particular, Christine Hogan, a long-term Coolum resident and local journalist, for their diligent research and for drawing my attention to the potential problems this decision will create.