



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Main Committee**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Petition: National Rental Affordability Scheme**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 23 November 2009**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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| <p><b>Date</b> Monday, 23 November 2009<br/> <b>Page</b> 110<br/> <b>Questioner</b><br/> <b>Speaker</b> Robert, Stuart, MP</p> | <p><b>Source</b> House<br/> <b>Proof</b> Yes<br/> <b>Responder</b><br/> <b>Question No.</b></p> |
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**Mr ROBERT** (Fadden) (4.09 pm)—I rise to table a petition that has been to the Petitions Committee and has been approved. It addresses the Hon. the Speaker and members of the House of Representatives. The petition, from residents of the Gold Coast suburb of Coombabah, draws to the attention of the House that applications for developments requesting assistance under the National Rental Affordability Scheme may be approved regardless of whether local government approval has been sought or received for the development and without community consultation. The petitioners request that the House intervenes to amend the NRAS legislation to ensure local government approval is acquired for any development before applications can be submitted and that all applications are available to the public for comment prior to any consideration of an NRAS application.

This issue came about because an application for an NRAS project was submitted for 134 units on Hansford Road in Coombabah in the mighty electorate of Fadden. Whilst I and the residents of Coombabah have absolutely no problem with social housing and certainly welcome it, approval has been given for 60 two-storey dwellings on the site that has been chosen. The application that is now before council and has NRAS approval from the minister is for 134 three-storey units. That is completely out of character with the area. The residents had no ability to have their voices heard by the federal Minister for Housing and to register a range of objections. That is an anomaly that should be addressed within the NRAS application process.

It is not that the residents of Coombabah are against social housing; it is just that they want a voice. They want some answers. They want to know what will happen after 10 years, considering that Queensland is somewhat unique in that, for people to enjoy the benefits of an NRAS social housing development, they must be on the one social housing list, which is the list covering housing commission houses in Queensland—a list that, currently, has people waiting for 10 years. They want to know what happens when people go into these 134 units and, after 10 years, when federal and state governments withdraw their support, how those people will be able to continue to afford living in those units.

They are perfectly reasonable and respectable questions to ask. People also want to know what is happening with social housing and housing commissions throughout the nation. It is noted that, in the last 10 years, as state governments, predominantly Labor, have controlled housing commissions across the nation, the number of houses available has decreased by 6,000, yet \$6 billion has been spent. How can you spend \$6 billion and have, as a net result, 6,000 fewer houses? The residents of Coombabah seek answers to a range of questions, and part of the petition process is to start that journey of seeking answers and indeed redress.

*The petition read as follows—*

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives

This petition from residents of the Gold Coast suburb of Coombabah draws to the attention of the House that applications for developments requesting assistance under the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) may be approved regardless whether local government approval has been sought or received for the development, and without community consultation.

Your petitioners therefore request that the House intervenes to amend the NRAS legislation to ensure local government approval is acquired for any development before applications can be submitted and that all applications are available to the public for comment prior to any consideration of an NRAS application.

from 519 citizens

Petition received.