



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Tuesday, 29 April 2008

PICNIC BAY RECREATION CENTRE

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (9.30 pm): Tonight I want to express my concern about plans by the Bligh Labor government to possibly sell the Picnic Bay Recreation Centre on Magnetic Island. A decision to sell this important facility would be to the detriment of many north Queenslanders, particularly school students, community groups and charities, some of whom travel huge distances to access this affordable recreational facility.

This morning I placed a question on notice to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport, who is responsible for the administration of the 12 recreation facilities currently managed by the department of sport and recreation throughout Queensland. A Service Delivery and Performance Commission report from July 2007 indicates that the state government has resolved to sell off five of these centres including two in north Queensland—in Mount Isa and at Seaforth near Mackay—while the Picnic Bay Recreation Centre facility on Magnetic Island is also being considered for sale.

I have asked Minister Spence, in relation to the report by the Service Delivery and Performance Commission review regarding the Magnetic Island Recreation Centre and the options listed for the future management of the centre, to provide a guarantee that the state government will continue to operate the centre or that ownership of the centre will be transferred to Education Queensland, the Townsville City Council or another not-for-profit community organisation to ensure it continues to offer affordable services to the community and will not be sold to a private commercial operator.

Three different options are floated in the July 2007 report by the Service Delivery and Performance Commission for the future management of the Magnetic Island Recreation Centre including transferring the centre to Education Queensland or another state government department, transferring the asset to local government or a community group, or, as is to be the fate of five other recreational centres across Queensland, divestment of the asset which is code for selling the recreational centre to commercial interests.

Schools in my electorate and servicing communities in my electorate such as Ingham State High School, Gilroy Santa Maria College, St Anthony's Catholic College Deeragun, and Northern Beaches State High School use the Picnic Bay Recreation Centre. Schools from all over north Queensland including from the Burdekin, Charters Towers, Longreach, Mount Isa, Mackay, Burketown, Emerald and Collinsville also use the centre.

Community based organisations and charities including the Australian Red Cross, Camp Quality cancer kids, the Deaf Society, the Diabetes Family Group and the Smith Family also utilise this facility. I call on the minister to disclose what negotiations with Education Queensland, with Townsville City Council or with other not-for-profit community organisations have been pursued for the future management of the Picnic Bay Recreation Centre as discussed in the report to demonstrate that these options are not just window-dressing. If the facility on Magnetic Island is sold to a commercial interest, there will be no similar facility between Yeppoon and Lake Tinaroo on the Atherton Tableland. Such a decision would be a dreadful betrayal of north Queenslanders by the Bligh government.