



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

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HALIFAX POLICE STATION

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (6.58 pm): I rise to appeal desperately to the police minister to stop tomorrow's auctioning off of the old Halifax Police Station in the township of Halifax in my electorate of Hinchinbrook. My appeal tonight follows correspondence from me to the police minister on 19 November and 9 December 2009 and 1 February 2010 making representations on behalf of the Halifax Progress Association.

The Halifax Progress Association wants to preserve the old Halifax Police Station. The interest of the progress association stems from the historical connection between the old Halifax Police Station and Sir Arthur Fadden, a former Prime Minister of Australia, who was born in the Herbert River district on 13 April 1895. Sir Arthur's father was stationed at Halifax at the time as a local police officer. This is the same building where a young Sir Arthur spent his early years, and the Halifax community is proud of the historical connection.

This connection was recognised by the former police minister, Judy Spence, when she opened the new police station at Halifax on Wednesday, 28 February 2007. The station was built in 1885 and had serviced the Halifax community for 122 years prior to the new station being opened. Given the historical significance of the old Halifax Police Station to the Halifax community, especially given that this significance was clearly known to the government, it is a concern to me that the government plans to auction the building off tomorrow. It is true that following representations to the minister, the government did place a condition of sale on the auction requiring the building to remain in the Herbert River district. However, something that both the Halifax Progress Association and I requested, which has been ignored by the Bligh government, is consultation with the Halifax community that would discuss how the building could be managed going forward to preserve its heritage value.

It would be understandable if the state government needed the land for another community use or if we were asking the state government to spend substantial amounts of money on the old Halifax Police Station. But this is not the case. No alternative use has been flagged, although we all suspect the land will be sold off. The Halifax Progress Association has put up its hand to take responsibility for maintaining the building, if it can secure a peppercorn lease over the land and acquire the building for a minimal cost. Such an arrangement would not cost the government anything.

The Halifax Progress Association has indicated that it wanted to work with the Halifax museum to use the old Halifax Police Station for historical displays and of course to raise awareness of the local connection with Sir Arthur Fadden. Along with the museum, Halifax would then have a real heritage precinct to promote as a tourist attraction. What the Halifax Progress Association cannot afford is to buy the building at auction, to pay for it to be relocated and also to pay for a block of land to relocate the building to. Having contacted the police minister on three occasions, this is my last ditch attempt to have him listen to the people of Halifax and protect the heritage and history of this proud little community.