

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Mr David Templeman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Andrea Mitchell; Mr John McGrath; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Troy Buswell

PERMANENT PARK HOME RESIDENTS

Motion

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham) [4.01 pm]: I move —

That the house calls on the Barnett government to take urgent action to help permanent park home residents obtain greater certainty in relation to their living arrangements into the future.

I want to commence by welcoming to the gallery all the people who have come here today to listen to this debate.

[Interruption from the gallery.]

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.P. O’Gorman): I wish to advise the people in the gallery—it pains me to do this—that you are not entitled to participate in the debate. That includes clapping or cheering or egging the members on. We appreciate you coming in to listen, and I know that this is a matter that is very close to your hearts and is very emotional for many of you, but I ask that you do not interfere in the debate and let the members in this chamber continue uninterrupted.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I think my mother might be up there and might have organised that, but maybe not. You are lovely people. Thank you very much for that welcome. I am not often greeted in that way when I stand up to speak in the house.

Mr T.R. Buswell: There’s a first time for everything!

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is unusual that I am greeted in that way. We will see how the Minister for Housing, Hon Troy Buswell, is greeted when he stands up to speak.

It is fantastic that so many people with an interest in this issue have come along today to watch Parliament in action and to listen to the arguments on this issue. It is fantastic. I congratulate the member for Mandurah, David Templeman, for his consultation with the Park Homes Owners Association to organise today’s event. The fact that so many people have come here today also shows to the government the seriousness with which people in this community regard this issue. It would be fair to say, looking at the crowd, that most of the people who have come along here today are older Western Australians who have made a decision to live in a park home for a range of reasons. Broadly speaking, they are normally lifestyle reasons but they are often economic reasons. Sometimes it is a mix of those two. All these people have come along today to listen because they have grave concerns about their future living arrangements. It would be fair to say that they have legitimate concerns about their future living arrangements because we know of cases in which caravan parks and park home estates are closing or are there is a threat that they will close.

I want to commence my address by reading out a letter that I received in my office from a resident of a caravan park in my electorate of Rockingham. I have three caravan parks within the boundaries of my electorate. In the broader Rockingham area there would be five or so but within my electorate there are three caravan parks, one of which is just up the street from where I live. There is the Palm Beach Caravan Park in the lovely area of Palm Beach, the Cee and See Caravan Park, which is alongside the grain silos at Rockingham Beach, and the Rockingham Holiday Village, which is out on Dixon Road in a semirural area only a few minutes from the beach in Rockingham. I would expect that between 400 and 500 plus people live in those three parks. It may well be quite a lot more but I would say at least that number of people live in these park home villages in my electorate of Rockingham. One of them brought me letter that he received. He is an older gentleman. He was on a motorised scooter when he came to see me. He has difficulty getting around. He lives in the Palm Beach Caravan Park. He has lived there for 18 or so years. It has been the place of his retirement. I expect that he will live there for the rest of his life. He certainly hopes that he will, according to the conversation that he had with me. The letter he received on 15 January 2011 states —

ALL TENANTS

This is to notify you, that as of 1st February 2011 my business, Palm Beach Caravan Park, will officially be on the market for sale. Contrary to any previous rumors this is the first and only time that this business has been for sale.

The reasons that have brought me to this decision are, I will be of retirement age this year and have owned and operated this business for approximately 23 years. Therefore because neither of my children is interested in taking over the running of the park I have decided to sell up and retire.

The Caravan Park will be sold as is; unfortunately, I can not guarantee the actions of any future owner.

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I will read that last sentence again —

The Caravan Park will be sold as is; unfortunately, I can not guarantee the actions of any future owner.

That letter is signed by the current owner of the Palm Beach Caravan Park. Naturally, that letter went out to the scores of residents in the park. A number of them have contacted my office. That last paragraph implies that their security in the park, the place that is their home, that they have lived in for decades in some cases, is now threatened. That is a legitimate concern of those people if we read the last paragraph of that letter. Those people now have some concern about their future in the Palm Beach Caravan Park.

I digress by saying that the Palm Beach Caravan Park is quite famous. The original writers of *Home and Away*, which is based upon a caravan park in Summer Bay, originally based the show on the caravan park in Palm Beach. They lived there. There was a series of stories surrounding the life and times of people living in the caravan park at Palm Beach. It subsequently went on to be based upon a New South Wales caravan park. It was a reflection of the fact that people living in the park had social interaction with one another and had a lifestyle that they enjoyed. They liked the lifestyle and they liked being near the beach. They liked the affordability and the fact that they could pack up and go away at a moment's notice without a great deal of trouble or turmoil. People like a range of things about that lifestyle and I am sure the people in the gallery here today feel the same.

We have dozens of these parks in Western Australia. I have three in my electorate. I think there are 11 or so in holiday areas such as the member for Mandurah's electorate. There are lots of them throughout Western Australia. Two major issues are often raised in connection with caravan parks. Firstly, there is the tourism issue. Caravanning is the tourism choice of a lot of people. They like to go caravanning or stay in a tent and the like. That is an important issue. For that lifestyle to continue for lots of people, it is very important that the economic life of many towns around Western Australia continue. It is very important for the holiday enjoyment of many Western Australians and those people from the eastern states who come here to enjoy that lifestyle. But it is nowhere near as important as people's homes. We are dealing with people's homes. The people who live in these parks do not have anywhere else to go. These parks are their homes. Whilst the heat is often generated around people being upset that their holiday location is lost, for many people it is their home that is lost. I think that is sometimes forgotten. When parks are closed and sold off for whatever purpose, if they are not sold off for the continuing purpose of providing a place for people to live, people will lose their homes. These are often people without a great deal of money to find somewhere else to live. That is why it is so important that we as a state, we as a Parliament, come to grips with this issue to deal with it seriously and forcefully, and that the resources of government go towards resolving this issue and not leaving it on the backburner any longer. The issue is becoming more and more important because the value of land of areas such as the Palm Beach Caravan Park is going up. Therefore, the people who live there, many of whom have lived there for decades, are under greater threat of losing their homes. Also, because the land value is going up the next person who buys that land may not have the same ideas for it as the current owner. They may well want to cut up the land, throw out the people and put housing or some other development on it. That is why this is an issue for people out there.

This issue has been recognised for a number of years. I remember talking about it in the late 1990s. During the term of the former government there was a review into this matter and some legislative changes were made under the Residential Parks (Long-stay Tenants) Act. Although there is a difference of views, amongst people in the Park Home Owners Association and people more broadly, generally speaking that review and legislation improved the situation by providing a bit more certainty for people. Therefore, there was an improvement to that situation under that act.

Mr T.R. Buswell: And member, it also improved some of the notifications that were required.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is right. It provided a six-month, or it might be a 180-day, notice period for people being evicted without cause. It also meant that formal agreements needed to be made. Therefore, someone moving into one of these parks needed to have a written agreement so that they understood their rights and responsibilities. Those conditions did not exist before that act. A lot of people had lived in these places without any sort of tenancy agreement or certainty whatsoever for a long time. They went to the office once a week or fortnight and paid their money to continue to live there—that was the extent of the agreement. There is a range of complicating factors. First, these places are often not cheap to live in. Although people assume that they are cheap, the rent is often quite expensive considering that the landlord does not own the place in which the tenant lives and does not pick up the cost of electricity and some of the other utilities. The rent people pay is actually quite expensive; therefore, people have an expectation to some decent quality of life in these places. Also complicating matters, as I alluded to earlier, is the fact that people own the vans or cabins in which they live in these caravan parks or residential villages, even though they are renting land upon which they are placed. Those vans often cannot be moved. I have been to caravan parks in my electorate and around the place. Often the

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dwellings have been there for a long time and it is very difficult for them to be moved. People also often purchase them from the owner of the park, from an earlier tenant or a deceased estate at a higher value. I have seen them for sale at real estate offices in Rockingham for over \$100 000. There is an expectation on the part of the person who has bought their home that they will be able to keep their home on the site they purchased it on—especially if they cannot move it. A caravan that can be moved might be less of an issue, but a lot of the dwellings cannot be moved, or at least not easily. Therefore, those people own a home that they paid a lot of money for and that they cannot move, and they are under threat of losing it without any compensation. We can see why people are upset and angry about the prospect of receiving a letter such as the one that people in my electorate received from the proprietor of the Palm Beach Caravan Park. It is a difficult issue.

On the other hand, there are the owners of the parks, many of whom have purchased the properties as a superannuation package, for want of a better expression; it is what they own and what they want to leave to their children. I have no ill will or ill feeling towards them. However, sometimes those people have encouraged the purchaser of the caravan or cabin to purchase it at a high price, without ever informing them or giving them any notice that the place may not be there in a year's time. I think that there is some obligation to the person purchasing the property. A lot of people are not particularly interested in reading contracts full of writing such as the one I hold, or in dealing with conveyancers and lawyers. Although there is a principle under the common law of caveat emptor—let the buyer beware—I have always thought that principle is a bit unfair. It is a bit rough to say that people moving into these parks, many of whom are elderly and may not have a great deal of money, should have understood the law of indefeasibility of title under the Torrens title system and known that they did not have rights to the land upon which the home sits—with the knowledge of the owner of the park—and therefore had no security of title. I say to the government: be kind to these people. It should not expect them to have the knowledge of commercial lawyers when they purchase these properties. It should not expect them to have the knowledge and skills and the wherewithal of someone buying a property in Nedlands, because they will not have it. The government needs to be understanding of the fact that sometimes these people have been misled, ill-advised, ill-informed or, quite frankly, defrauded by the advice they were given when they bought these places.

There are scores of these places and tens of thousands of people are in this position. I remember that in the 1990s more than 20 000 people in Western Australia lived in these parks. I cannot imagine that the figure has gone down with the population growth and the lifestyle choices that people make. Tens of thousands of Western Australians are in this position. I say to the government that it has a blueprint, which is the report by the Economics and Industry Standing Committee on the "Provision, Use and Regulation of Caravan Parks (and Camping Grounds) in Western Australia". There are recommendations in that report that the government needs to seriously look at. I acknowledge that this is a difficult issue; this is not an issue that is easy to resolve. I have seen the government's response, which was sent in a letter to a member of the Park Home Owners Association from the Minister for Planning, Hon Jon Day, who is not in this place today. The response says that there are three principal things that the government will do. First, the letter states —

- (1) The Department of Commerce (DoC) has been ensuring that caravan park operators comply with the *Residential (Long-stay Tenants) Act*, including the giving of the correct notice to tenants ... The DoC has also co-ordinated the preparation of the "Assistance Protocol for Residential Park Closures" ...

I am not sure what an assistance protocol is. The second thing that has been done is —

- (2) The Department of Housing has been assisting tenants of caravan parks facing closure with advice ...

I am sure that advice is welcome for people who are about to be thrown on the street. The third thing that the government has done is to evaluate sites in accordance with the earlier advice for possible development of new caravan park or park home sites that can be developed by the private sector on government land. The government is looking at two sites and the detailed plans of the sites will be completed by February 2011 ready for the lodgement of applications for development approval. It is now April. This letter was signed in late March 2011. Therefore, the minister signed the letter saying that sites would be identified ready for the lodgement of applications for development approval by February 2011, which is a month before he signed the letter. Is anyone listening? That is a bit strange. However, the minister said that two sites would be identified. I do not know where those two sites are. I have not seen any announcement in relation to that. The sites were supposed to be announced back in February, a month before he signed the letter that said they were going to be announced, and it is now April. That response by the minister is not a sufficient answer to the problem faced by the people in the public gallery today.

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The minister needs to look at more aggressive solutions to this problem. The minister needs to focus like a laser beam on the problem. This is a social problem that will approach us as a state when people are being thrown out of their homes. The minister should not think it is a joke, because it has already happened. I understand that Kingsway Caravan Park in the northern suburbs has closed and people have had to find somewhere else to live.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Aqua Caravan Park, out by 13 June.

Mr M. McGOWAN: In Mandurah, people at Aqua Caravan Park have to be out by 13 June.

Mr A.J. Waddell: One in Forrestfield.

Mr M. McGOWAN: And one in Forrestfield.

I went to Dixon Road holiday village the other day, which is not under any threat, with, of all things, the local soup kitchen and delivered soup to needy people. I went to the door of a van and delivered soup and a sandwich to a lady there. Funnily enough, she recognised me. It would be fair to say that she was chuffed!

Mr T.R. Buswell: You did have your name badge on!

Mr M. McGOWAN: For once she got something from a politician! I delivered her some soup. She is 95 years old and she was in her van. She is not under any threat of eviction, as far as I am aware, and the park is under no threat of closure. But I imagine there are ladies around the place like that lady, who is a widow. If there are 95-year-old ladies like that around the place and they get one of these letters of eviction, what are they going to do? Where are they going to go? It is all right for us; we earn pretty good money and so forth and we can come up with solutions. But I cannot imagine the stress, like the stress on the people in the Aqua Caravan Park and other places around the state, on someone who is 95. The minister, therefore, needs to look at more innovative solutions than the solutions in this letter.

I will suggest a few solutions. First of all, finding two sites, one north of the river and one south of the river, when potentially hundreds of people will be thrown out of their homes, is not good enough. It is not quick enough. It is not efficient enough. It is not enough. The minister needs to do more than look at two sites, particularly as he said two months ago he would announce the sites. As far as I am aware he has announced nothing in that regard. The minister needs to make more land available and he needs to do it quickly. He needs to look at providing financial incentives; or, as a last resort, purchase places like this when they come up for sale. I know members have talked about issues of state debt, but I recall sitting in this place as a cabinet minister back in 2007–08 when a block of flats came up for sale in Fremantle. The land was going to be redeveloped and people were going to be thrown out. As the block came up for sale, there was grave concern for the 200 or 300 vulnerable people who lived there, who were about to be chucked out and had nowhere else to go. Does the minister know what we did? We brought in a cabinet submission and bought the property, and it was handed over to the Department of Housing, I think, to manage. We did that because there was no other solution.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Where was it?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is in Fremantle. The member for Fremantle might know its address.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Seaview Lodge.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Seaview Lodge sounds familiar. As members can imagine, the former member for Fremantle was very keen on this cabinet submission proceeding. If it had been in my electorate, I would have been very keen on it as well. A cabinet submission therefore came in and the state purchased the property. It is therefore not unprecedented for the state to take that action to resolve an issue when people are confronted by this sort of problem. As I said before, these places are not exactly unprofitable. It is not an unprofitable business with 200 people living there who all pay \$150 a week for a little plot of land, pay their own electricity and water bills and have a shower block, a toilet block and the lifestyle as part of it. I have not heard of many poor caravan park owners; perhaps the people upstairs in the gallery have, but I sincerely doubt it. Generally, I think caravan parks are very good businesses. It is not as though the minister would be throwing away money by buying the business.

As an alternative to continuing the park's operations, the minister needs to look at a financial arrangement with the owner of a park who definitely intends to sell it. The alternative is to put 150 people straight onto the Homeswest wait list.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Member, just for your information, unfortunately that is not always the case. The Department of Housing can, when a park is going to be closed, go out and work with people. Surprisingly, in a lot of them not a big percentage of residents qualify. I just provide that for your information. The department is not always in a position to help in terms of providing social housing.

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Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr T.R. Buswell: It is not good.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am suggesting to the minister solutions and I think he should take them seriously.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I am taking them seriously. I am just telling you what happens; that's all.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We do have a Homeswest wait list in this state with 24 000 applicants comprising 55 000 —

Mr T.R. Buswell: No, it's under 24 000 now.

Mr D.A. Templeman: This will add to them.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I know.

Mr D.A. Templeman: And the people around here will be on that list and you will have a further burden.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Yes, and it is the point I was trying to make.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The minister needs to get a focus on it. That is what I am suggesting to the minister. I am not ascribing to him bad-faith motives; other people might. The minister needs to get a handle on this issue and focus on it. As land values increase, this problem will continue. The solution the minister proposed so far in this letter from John Day, Minister for Planning, is nowhere near enough.

The other thing the minister can look at for these people is relocation compensation. Frankly, it is unfair for people who have purchased a caravan home in good faith for between \$100 000 and \$180 000, with the advice and knowledge of the person who owns the land upon which it sits, to be told that it is not theirs, that they cannot move it and that they must leave. While there will be circumstances in which people are in the know—as I said earlier most people who move into these places are not lawyers or experts in the indefeasibility of Torrens title land—most are just ordinary people trying to find somewhere to live. I again say to the minister that he needs to focus on making more land available, purchasing the land where necessary, making financial arrangements with the owners of parks to continue their operation, offering relocation compensation, and perhaps putting even more effort into making sure that people who are moving into new places now are fully aware of the situation so that this situation is not perpetuated. All those things are ideas that the minister can take up. I am not proposing in this place a range of problems without solutions. I am suggesting to the minister that he needs to focus on and take up this issue; otherwise there would not be between 70 and 80 people in the gallery today if this was not such a serious issue. I encourage the minister therefore to do exactly that.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [4.28 pm]: I am very pleased that this motion is before the house because it should be of interest to every member of this place. I welcome to the Parliament the residents of various caravan park and park home premises from various electorates. Members of this place need to understand that we are now talking about a serious crisis in the status and future of caravan park and park home living in the state. Members need only look at the statistics to see that caravan park areas are not opening up; they are closing down or under the threat of closing down. I am pleased the Minister for Local Government is here, because I think local government has a key role in this. Even though some of the local governments that I talk to, including my own, are concerned about it, they do not want to do anything about it. I think the Minister for Local Government needs to read the report by the Economics and Industry Standing Committee on caravan parks and camping grounds, which was released in 2009, because there are some implications for local government. As the local member of the regional area of Bunbury, I am sure the minister is also concerned about it.

I say to the Minister for Housing that this is a key housing affordability issue. The member for Rockingham very clearly outlined why it is important that we continue to support, encourage and protect park home living as an affordable housing option. It is chosen by many thousands of Western Australians as an affordable housing option, and it is a great lifestyle.

The Minister for Planning, who is not here at the moment, has a huge responsibility but also is a key to the solution. The report brought down by the Economics and Industry Standing Committee had very clear implications for the Minister for Planning. There are clear implications and responsibilities for the Leader of the National Party in his portfolios of lands and regional development. Ultimately, there are implications for the Minister for Tourism. I know he is in the Parliament today. He should be in here. The Minister for Tourism should be here.

Mr J.E. McGrath: No, he has gone.

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Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: He should be here.

Mr J.E. McGrath: He is on a plane to Darwin.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No, he is on a plane tomorrow to Darwin—not today.

Mr J.E. McGrath: It is today.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is not what my pair request says.

This is an issue for him not only as the Minister for Tourism, but also as the member for Dawesville. A number of caravan parks in the Dawesville electorate have closed over the last 15 or so years. I have mentioned five ministers. This is a critical issue for government. It has to take up the cudgel and not only say that it is looking into it or it is looking at some land opportunities, but also actually do it. If we do not do it, the Aqua Caravan Parks of the world will close, and the Belvedere Caravan Park in Mandurah, which is currently under threat of a development plan, will close. Those in Busselton in the southern part of the state will close. Kingsway has already gone, and some of those in the metropolitan area will close. Then we will suddenly ask, “What happened?” Not only will we not have an affordable housing option for thousands of Western Australians but also the people who tow their caravans around the country, as is a growing trend, will have no bays or places to park them, so then there will be an effect on the tourism industry. This issue is a clear responsibility of a number of ministers, and the report brought down by the Economics and Industry Standing Committee set out some key solutions.

I want to read out a couple of letters that the member for Rockingham highlighted. We have to get this in the picture because these are real people, real Western Australians, and their park homes or their vans are their homes and they are proud of them. They love living where they have chosen to live. They enjoy the lifestyle that these park home complexes give them. Audrey Todd from Belvedere in a letter to me writes —

My name is Audrey Todd. My husband’s name is David Todd. We have lived in the park —

Belvedere —

since 1994. When we bought the Fleetwood Park home we hoped to stay. As both of us are in our late 70s, I would be very sad to leave.

Finances. Should we be told to leave we would not have the finances to do so. We live on the age pension and do not have any other income apart from my English pension (Audrey).

Health. Our health is reasonable. My husband contracted a virus a few years ago which affected his heart and diabetes. We would like to stay close to our GP.

Transport. We do not own a car and rely solely on public transport.

Please help.

Betty Campbell writes —

I bought my park home in 1997 ... paying \$65 000. I have spent \$2000 on repairs and painting; \$1 200 on a new gas hot water system during the last two years.

I was expecting to live here until I can no longer look after myself, as it is close to amenities.

I have a car which is now over 20 years old. I was planning to get a gopher when my car gives up.

I am 78 and have no serious sickness except for arthritis.

As I am a pensioner and most of my money went into the purchase of my park home, I cannot afford to pay for the removal to another site unless I can get some help.

Here’s hoping that something can be worked out for us all.

The last letter I want to mention is from Lilian Fletcher. I am not sure whether Lilian is at Aqua Caravan Park any more; I do not think she is still there. She writes —

Jan 6th 2005 my husband and I bought this park home. Since living here we have spent all our savings on several home improvements.

Two weeks ago all tenants were told by letter that the park was up for sale and we had to relocate or sell our homes. On purchasing our home we were told that this would always stay as a caravan park.

October last year my husband passed away after a short illness, so now I am on my own and have nowhere to go.

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Lilian, Mr and Mrs Todd and countless others are real people, real Western Australians, who have invested their life savings in many respects in their homes. Some of these park homes are very impressive. They are beautiful. I have been in a number of them. As the member for Rockingham said, if these people are told they are shifting or they have to shift, the cost then becomes huge. I want to give an example of the cost, because it is important we understand that. I will give an example of a gentleman who had to move from Kingsway, which was a caravan park that closed, to Cherokee. By the time he had paid for a reserve site at Cherokee, a transporter, the dismantling of the car port, electrical disconnection and reconnection, plumbers, furniture removal, accommodation while that was being done and the set-up costs of the new site with some paving and some simple landscaping, it had cost 27 500. That is what it cost him to shift from Kingsway to Cherokee.

For many of the people who are told they have to shift or that the park is no longer going to be operational, those are the sorts of costs they are looking at, even if their home could be shifted. I have just read out three letters from people who do not have any more money. They do not have a spare \$30 000 in their back pocket or buried underneath the park home to use for that. They do not have that resource.

Let us look at some of the issues that the Park Home Owners Association and members are concerned about. A key point is the lack of a fixed-term lease. One of the problems with the legislation that was passed in 2005 was that, although it was well intentioned, all it did was basically put everyone on a 180-day lease. That is the reality. Basically, the owners said that the new legislation means everyone will be put on a 180-day lease, and that is what will happen. Very few people, if any, that I know of were offered a five or 10-year lease. I think one member from the group I met with last week said that one place offered someone a five-year lease. A key issue is the security of tenure for a lease. The people who live in park homes need a fixed-term lease. A fixed-term lease becomes more critical for a citizen in his or her 70s and upwards because it gives that person security of tenure. Most of these people—not all of them—are on either a fixed or low income. Very few people who chose to live in one of these homes are as wealthy as Alan Bond. They are on a low or fixed income. I want to make it very clear to members that this motion is not critical of the minister; we are not condemning the Barnett government. This motion urges the government to take action. That is what the people who are in the public gallery want to hear. We need to address the issue of fixed-term leases because it is critical. The member for Rockingham has highlighted some ways we can address the issue by providing security of land, and I will go into that later.

I turn now to the rising cost of rent. Centrelink increases do not always keep pace with rental increases. If an owner wants to get rid of a tenant, he can bump up the rent. People have experienced that potential problem. A lady who lives in a village in Fremantle has grave concerns about the eviction without cause clause—the no-appeal option. She made a very important point to me at the meeting when she said that people who rent privately cannot be evicted without a reason. They have to go through a process but that is not the case for many park home residents who, I understand, can be evicted without cause.

Mr T.R. Buswell: I am not sure of the extent to which the Residential Parks (Long-Stay Tenants) Act would override the provision you have referred to in the Residential Tenancies Act. I would be very surprised if somebody tried to use the eviction without a cause 60-days clause and the department did not take a very strong interest in it. I think that would be a breach of the Residential Parks (Long-Stay Tenants) Act. That is my personal view. I am happy to get advice on it. If you have any examples of when that has happened, I am very happy to follow it up.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am happy to provide the minister with the example given by one of the residents in that village.

Mr T.R. Buswell: That would be a clear breach of the intent of the legislation.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We need to clarify that because it is a very important aspect.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Are you saying that it has not happened but that you are concerned that it could happen?

Mrs C.A. Martin: It is happening in Kununurra and places like that. It has happened.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The issue of giving park home tenants the same rights as a tenant in private rental accommodation needs to be investigated very carefully. I understand that there is a clear discrepancy between those two types of tenants. The removal of eviction without grounds is a key issue for park home owners.

I mentioned the long-stay tenant fixed-term leases. The member for Rockingham highlighted the issue of providing adequate compensation to those who are evicted. People say that the tenants should have known about this. Every day I hear from people who were reassured by local government that a zoning of a particular caravan park would be permanent. They have told me that they have talked to the local officers and even some councillors who told them not to worry about it because there is no way that it would change. A lot of people

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from Aqua Caravan Park have told me that they went to the Shire of Murray and made inquiries. They said they were thinking about buying a park home or caravan in that place and were told not to worry and that it would be fine because the council did not have any plan to change the zoning. I was not there, so I do not know who they spoke to. It is not just one person who has told me; a number of people have told me this and said that they bought a site based on that advice.

Mr T.R. Buswell: You are exactly right. In Busselton people who are living in caravan parks have had to move while the caravan park is redeveloped. The zoning does not change. The developers lodge a development application that is consistent with the zoning but is not consistent with the people living there—for example, a ritzy resort—and everyone has to move. Even if the shire refuses the application, the landowner can appeal to SAT and you are back where you started.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Rockingham highlighted this issue very clearly. This is where the Minister for Housing can put pressure on the Minister for Planning, and the Minister for Local Government can support —

Mr T.R. Buswell: I am the planning minister this week.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Maybe the minister could sign off on this by Monday at the next cabinet meeting.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The government could do what the United Kingdom government did to address the issue of the security of tenure. I understand that 250 000 people in the UK live in park homes in 2 000 residential parks. The UK government legislated to provide for the security of tenure and the permanent zoning of residential parks. There are two key provisions under the Mobile Homes Act 1983. That act states that residents have the right to keep their mobile or relocatable home on site indefinitely. Residents also have the right to sell their home on site but park owners are entitled to receive a commission of 10 per cent of the sale price. The UK government has designated land and legislated that the land can be used only for the provision of park owners—end of story. It is a clear message to the developers to not come speculating. The Woolworths of the world—this happened to the residents of Aqua—cannot say, “Hello, here’s a nice piece of land on Pinjarra Road.” Woolworths does not give a hoot about the people who call that place home. When Woolworths purchases it, it does not have to deal with the people who are going to be homeless. If those sorts of sites were clearly designated for the purpose for which they were set aside, it would be the end of the story and the problem would be solved.

The government needs to do two things, which are similar to what the member for Rockingham said. Firstly, it must identify the parks that are already under threat and, if necessary, purchase them. If it is a suitable site and the infrastructure is already there, the government should look at purchasing it. The member for Rockingham used Fremantle as an example. Purchase them. Secondly, if that is not possible, the government could identify and allocate crown land—that recommendation is in the report—to be used for the specific purpose of this sort of lifestyle. That is what the government can do. Let me give members a couple of examples of land that already exists. I have had a chat to the minister about the land in Waterloo off the South Western Highway. The owners want to expand that park if possible. The minister should talk to the owners and then talk to the Minister for Planning. That is one site. I believe that a couple of sites in the Peel region could be looked at tomorrow. They can be identified and either purchased by the government or given a specific zoning allocation. There are sites all throughout the state where this could be done. A number of recommendations in the report highlighted that. The worry I have is that the machinations of the Department of Local Government, the Department of Planning, and the Department of Housing to a lesser extent, saw the recommendations in the report and said, “Yes, we’ll respond”, but there ain’t much happening! I would suspect there is not much happening at all. In the meantime, these people, and many other hundreds who are not here in the gallery today, still face the prospect that tomorrow they could get an eviction notice—like the one the member for Rockingham held up—like the people from Aqua Caravan Park have already received, saying “Sorry; you’re out on 13 June.” Aqua Caravan Park residents received a notice like that just before Christmas. What a great Christmas present—a termination notice that says “get out by June”!

What has that caused many of these people to do? Some of them still do not know what to do. I mentioned Norma Fletcher. Norma still does not know what to do. The housing department has assisted some residents; others are still grappling with what to do. They have an asset they may have paid over \$100 000 for. A couple of cowboys are going around banging on the door saying, “Hey, I’ll get rid of it. I’ll give you 20 grand.” This is happening. What do they do? There is no surety of being helped to relocate, if there was a place for them to relocate to. What do they do? Some of them are actually sitting, waiting and asking, “What do I do? I hope something comes along.” Meanwhile, someone bangs on the door and says, “Hey, I’ll give you 20 grand. I’ll

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take it off your hands.” Some of them paid over 100 grand for these things. This is their homes and this is the reality.

One of the problems is the legislation. I will read from that legislation, which is the Residential Parks (Long-stay Tenants) Bill 2005. We were in government at the time it was passed, and it was supported by the then opposition. I will read from the bill’s explanatory memorandum —

... the Bill seeks to:

- balance the needs of residential park residents for greater security of tenure while supporting the maintenance of existing, and the development of new, residential parks;

Let us go through it. It seeks to “balance the needs of residential park residents for greater security of tenure”. Has it succeeded? No. It has failed. Has it supported the maintenance of existing parks? The big answer is no. We have lost them. At least 10 have been lost in the Peel region in the past 15 years. Aqua Caravan Park has almost gone—in a few weeks it will be gone. Belvedere Caravan Park is under great threat. The next reference is a key—“and the development of new, residential parks”. I have not heard of many new residential parks being created since this legislation was passed in 2006. The legislation has failed; I do not have a problem admitting that. We tried. We thought this legislation would work. It has failed. It has not given these people here in the gallery any security of tenure at all. In fact it has probably given the opposite. The only security of tenure is that they know that once they receive that bit of paper, there are 180 days to go! We have to fix it. I say to the minister: we are willing on this side to work with him to get this done. This is not a motion of condemnation. We are not condemning the Barnett government for inaction. We are urging the Barnett government—because it is the government in power—to do something about it.

What can we do? Let us look at the issue of amending legislation. I think the 2005 legislation is up for review in 2014.

Mr T.R. Buswell: In 2012.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is next year, 2012. It will be too late for some of these people. It is too late for Darrell and his wife from Aqua Caravan Park. They are out. They still do not know where they are going. Darrell and his wife do not know where they are going today. They are due out by 13 June.

Let us introduce some amendments to remove the “eviction without grounds”. Let us deal with the long-term lease issue. That needs to be in partnership with the identification of land. Every development commission under the power of the regional minister should have this as their priority, particularly those in the South West, the Peel, and probably the Pilbara. They are the three key areas. We identified those in the report. We need to look at this issue of controlling rents. I do not think legislation can do that, but it is an issue we need to look at closely. There is an issue about home owners being given the right to sell their own homes. Some parks restrict who can sell their home. Home owners want to sell but they do not have power over who does that! Management has the power. A person might say, “I’ve got my park home, a beautiful home, and I want to sell it. My health is deteriorating. I have been assessed by the aged-care assessment team. I need high care.” When they go to sell the unit, they are told, “Sorry, you can’t ring up the local agent from Elders or Century 21; it has to be done through the park.” That has to be addressed.

The answers are here. It is now about the will of a couple of key ministers to take up this challenge and actually take action not only to maintain park home living as a viable, enjoyable and affordable housing option for many thousands of Western Australians, but also to preserve an important historic component of Western Australian lifestyle—in fact Australian lifestyle. Not everyone wants to live in an apartment or a unit, not everyone wants to live in a four-by-two or a three-by-two; some people actually want to live in a park home, in a community environment, close to public transport, close to medical facilities, close to shopping and close to essential needs. Why should we not, as parliamentarians, say that that is actually all right and do everything we possibly can to make sure that is maintained? We have not done that. We have tried to legislate; we failed. Fix the legislation. Get the land, give it a clear zoning that ensures any developer or any person interested in speculating knows that, by law, they cannot change it; they cannot just buy it and chuck them out and build a Bunnings or something on it. It should be for the people who live there. It might also be a place where the caravanners of the country can call in, too. It seems we need a bit of a mix to ensure the viability of caravan parks.

The Minister for Tourism is not here, but I finish on this note. Even in the Minister for Tourism’s electorate there is the Estuary Hideaway Holiday Park. I am trying to delve into the problem with its council. The owners of that park want to provide up to 25 park home areas for park home people. I will talk to them later; I did not get a chance today. We need to work with people like that and say to them, “You’ve got to give us security of tenure; a five-year minimum. We don’t want you to build up the park and then suddenly flog it off and forget about the

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people you put in it.” We must work with them. This is a housing issue. I urge the Minister for Housing to work with those ministers I identified at the beginning of my speech and make this a priority of government. The minister will be applauded not only by these people here in the gallery, but also by their families, children and grandchildren, who want to make sure their grandparents or their mums and dads are looked after. Please do it. The minister can do it; he should do it. Do it now!

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [4.59 pm]: One of the problems with following the member for Mandurah is that he is very, very good; I hope my contribution does not disappoint when compared with his.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Never.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thank the Minister for Transport.

This issue was raised with me both during the election campaign and after I had been elected. There are a number of caravan parks with long-stay residents in my electorate, and one of the first issues raised with me after my election was what was going to happen to these caravan parks. As the member for Mandurah outlined, this is an emerging issue that is a combination of a number of elements, including the increasing land value in metropolitan and regional areas. Caravan park owners are sitting on land that is increasing in value daily. Housing affordability is another issue; there are not many options available to people and they are decreasing all the time. Housing affordability is a huge issue across the metropolitan area and across the state; the options that existed 20 or 30 years ago just do not now exist. People do not have the option of finding alternative accommodation in a short time frame.

I agree with the member for Mandurah that the legislation was well intended, but the outcome has not matched the intention. An issue raised with me all the time is the eviction of people without being given grounds; these people have purchased their own homes, yet they can be evicted without any grounds. Another key issue that has been raised with me by homeowners in long-stay caravan parks is that of not being able to sell their own homes, and having to have approval from the caravan park owner to do so, or having to allow the caravan park owner to sell the home for them. They are two of the key issues I want to raise today.

I also want to talk about the nature of agreements that have been struck around the place. I have been shown agreements that are quite intrusive and that impose a lot of obligations on residents. The legislation provides for these agreements, but I do not think it was ever intended that the detail and the restrictions they place on the homeowners would be that great. Again, these people own these homes; they are renting the land but they own the home. The incredible number of restrictions placed on these people limit their ability to have an enjoyable lifestyle.

Rent control is another issue I want to raise. I note that this is an issue that the association and a number of residents are pushing, and I think it needs to be looked at. These people own their own homes—they are just renting the land—so there is no justification for massive annual increases in rent. Minister, this needs to be looked at because imposing massive rent increases is another way of forcing people out of their homes.

The members for Mandurah and Rockingham outlined two possible solutions, one of which was to purchase some of the existing sites; the other was for the government to find alternative sites that it would own, and then contract them out, or lease them out, to managers. I want to talk about available sites and the fact that the government should be acting on this straightaway.

Recommendation 41 of the 2009 Economics and Industry Standing Committee report stated that the government should identify land suitable for the development of long-stay caravan parks and vest it in local government authorities, either for the longer term or on 50-year leases. I therefore contacted the former Minister for Housing—the member for Nedlands—about the action the government had taken to identify possible long-stay caravan park sites. He referred me to the Minister for Planning, and I did not get an answer from the member for Nedlands. This must be acted on urgently. Some sites have been identified, as the current Minister for Housing stated in 2009. In 2009, in response to a grievance from the member for Forrestfield, the minister said that four sites had been identified around the metropolitan area—which included my electorate—as possible sites for new long-stay caravan parks. As I understand it, those sites were in Kenwick and Huntingdale, and there were two in the Whiteman area in my electorate.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Where we were this morning.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, just opposite that site.

In 2010 I contacted the previous Minister for Housing—the member for Nedlands—about what action had been taken in relation to those four sites, but there was, again, no response; only a referral to the Minister for Planning. This needs to be acted on urgently. As the member for Mandurah said, we need to identify sites to

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provide people with options if their caravan parks close suddenly; they need options in a short time frame. There are just not enough options in the private housing market nowadays for people to find alternative accommodation.

The Minister for Housing is not in this place at the moment, but I hope his response today will include a commitment to develop those four sites into appropriate caravan parks and have them remain as caravan parks so that people can have some certainty when they live there. As the member for Mandurah said, these are real people living real lives in caravan parks, and they want certainty. I think the legislation tried to create that certainty, but the outcome did not meet the intention. I have been lobbied strongly on this issue by residents of my local caravan parks. After seeing firsthand what happened at Kingsway, which is just down the road, the residents know what happens when these parks close without sufficient notice being provided. I hope the minister's response to our contributions will inform us about the action that has been taken in relation to the four sites in the metropolitan area that were mentioned by him back in 2009—namely, the sites in Huntingdale and Kenwick, and the two Whiteman proposals.

This is an issue that will not go away because of the combination of increasing land prices, the increasing cost of housing across the metropolitan and regional areas of WA, and the number of people on the Homeswest waiting list. This is a serious issue that the government needs to work on to ensure that people are not left homeless time and time again.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [5.07 pm]: I would like to make a few statements in support of the motion. As chairman of the committee that the member for Mandurah referred to, I would like to make a couple of comments.

When we set up the committee, the member for Mandurah was not on it; he was a co-opted member. The reason he asked for, and we accepted, his co-option was because we knew it was a particular problem in his area. For many, many years—decades—it has been a major centre for caravanning, and most of us would have gone there with our kids or otherwise. It had become clear to us that a large number of the caravan parks were being closed down and turned into other things, and that a large number of parks were under threat. Also, a large number of parks had been converted from recreational caravan parks to long stays. What the member for Mandurah said today did nothing more than update the issue that we found a year or so ago when we undertook the inquiry.

This is an extremely serious issue for not only the metropolitan area, but also the regions, as he mentioned. The problem stems, as the member for West Swan said, from a combination of rising land prices, a lack of rental accommodation in the private market, huge queues for Homeswest properties, and the fact that generally the people who live in these caravan parks are not wealthy. They have spent their money on a caravan, and they are being evicted with very little alternative value to, or use for, their caravan, and very little tenure. There were also some structural legislation problems that the act, which has been criticised in this place, tried to deal with, but has probably not dealt with adequately.

My personal view is that, overwhelmingly, the issue comes down to finding alternative land for caravanning and to change the zoning arrangements for those new places so that they cannot subsequently be rezoned for alternative use. We do that for industrial land and for other purposes. We need to find additional land and to lock in the zoning for caravanning. Some of that land should be for temporary recreational caravanning, some for long stays and some should be a mix. That is the priority.

One of the things that people have to realise, and one of the major problems here, is that the land that was set aside for caravan parks was often set aside in pristine areas by the seaside, river or lakes. If members look around the metropolitan area, they will see that in any area that has a view of water, the price of land has risen sharply. It is a problem of proximity. I argue that many of the new sites cannot be in those same pristine areas—at least those for long-stay caravanning. We have to find alternative sites, maybe close by, but not sites that are as highly valued close by the ocean or otherwise.

It also comes down to tenure arrangements and educating people so that they know what they are getting into when they buy into these parks. To a large extent, that is a problem of the past because the decision has already been made. They might not have been well informed in the past, and we have to fix the problem they are in. But there is an education aspect.

Finally, one of the issues I would like the ministers to consider is what the committee found with what are styled “lifestyle villages”. There is a commercial outfit that operates as National Lifestyle Villages. I am not advocating that we use them, or otherwise. This organisation uses temporary homes. It buys land and puts temporary homes on the land in quite large numbers of 200 to 300 homes, which are very densely built on small blocks. The residents have a commonality of interest, with many of them being 55 years and over. The key aspect is that they

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are developing these lifestyle villages on land that is not zoned or reserved for housing, but reserved often for agricultural purposes. They are buying the land at a lower price than they would if they were buying land zoned for residential purposes. They can do that because they operate the land as a caravan park. That allows them to buy the land and, using transportable homes, they can put a home and land package together for people, which is quite nice—we visited many of these—at a much lower price than people could get in the used market or the new market, or that Homeswest can build in the temporary accommodation range. That is what we need to do.

These villages are also in locations, as the member for Mandurah said, where these people prefer to live. They are also in a lifestyle setting—a communal setting to which the people who are in the caravan parks are attracted. Although it was not clear, I formed the view that the planning authorities do not really like these lifestyle villages because they jump over the planning process in that they build villages on agricultural land, or on lower value land—that is, land that is not already gazetted for housing—and also they are not necessarily contiguous with the process by which the authorities plan amenities with hospitals, schools and other services. All I can say is that, overwhelmingly, the people who live in the caravan parks are not interested in schools because they have moved on in age a bit. They may require other amenities, and want to be closer to hospitals, but we can get land closer to hospitals and other services that occupants of caravan parks would need.

I urge the minister to look perhaps at a Homeswest lifestyle village-type option to absorb the increasing demand for people being evicted from existing caravan parks, and to put those people not only in the metropolitan area, but also in the Peel and other areas where the report identified the hottest demand. One thing is clear: this problem has been going on for about 15 years. There is clear evidence that caravan parks are under increasing pressure, that the number of people to be evicted will grow, and that the problems these people face are increasing, and, if anything, their options are decreasing. There will be a shortage of housing, as people are not building enough homes to fill the demand. The Homeswest waiting list is not shrinking. If someone is evicted from one of these caravan parks, there will be fewer and fewer spots for them to go—unless we do something. I reiterate to the member for Mandurah that we have to act quickly to acquire land and provide a housing style to address the real demand. Many of these people, as the member for Mandurah said, are the type of electors that we need to look after. They do not have too many options, whether it be because of their age or their asset base. Many of them perhaps were not fully informed when they went in there, but they tried to make the best of things and make a life for themselves and to support themselves. That is something that we as the government and as elected members should help. I urge the government to accept this critique, and to act.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [5.16 pm]: I do not intend to delay the house very long on this motion. Sometimes we can see motions that cry out for support from both sides of the chamber, and this is one of those. Like the member for Mandurah and the member for Riverton, I was a member of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee inquiry into the “Provision, Use and Regulation of Caravan Parks (and Camping Grounds) in Western Australia”. When the committee visited some of these parks that had long-stay residents, we could see the reasons that they wanted to live in such a lifestyle. Some were great environments; on the other hand, some were not and were quite poor quality residences, but clearly were very cheap.

One of the recommendations in the committee’s report was to rewrite disclosure documents from the Department of Commerce to make clearer the dangers for people buying into a park home. There are dangers, one of which is the issue of tenure. I want to acknowledge Bill and Lillian McIntosh—I do not know whether they are still in the public gallery—who are two of my oldest friends here in Western Australia. Bill was an official of the shop assistants’ union; I started working with him in 1989. Bill and Lillian are two of the people I have known here in Western Australia for as long as anybody else. I was having a chat to Bill about his tenure in a caravan park, and the fact that he only has a periodic lease and not a fixed-term lease. One of the committee’s findings was that it is preferable for a resident to have a fixed-term lease. I think that operators of parks need to examine why they are not providing fixed-term leases to residents.

One of the committee’s other findings was that it is clear that some park operators are evicting people from parks without a valid reason; it is because of the people in the park rather than management of the park. By that, I mean that if the park management find they have tenants who are prepared to stand up for themselves and to demand that there be a residents’ committee, which they are entitled to do under the act, they will evict those tenants because they will have an easier life, rather than worrying about the business of the park.

In the brief minutes I have to speak, I will comment on some of the recommendations that were not accepted or only partly accepted by the government. The first one I want to draw to the attention of members is recommendation 15, in which we recommended that local government treat caravan parks more kindly for local government rates. The government’s response was that it is a matter for councils. It may well be a matter for councils. We could change the Local Government Act so that councils cannot levy the higher rates on caravan

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parcs. The state government has given up its right to charge land tax on caravan parks. That is a good thing. Perhaps local councils need to think about giving up their rights to take the revenue out of the caravan parks as well. That would keep cost pressures off caravan parks. Not only that, if we had a clawback provision and a caravan park was redeveloped, there would be a retrospective 10 years of rates and there would be an incentive not to redevelop the park. Just in the same way as the land tax clawback acts as a retrospective opportunity to discourage redevelopment of parks, so would that provision.

I now want to talk about recommendation 33, which states —

The Minister for Planning provides for ‘lifestyle villages’ to be developed on rural zoned land.

I will not read out the whole response, but basically the government said it does not fit within its current planning procedures. I make the point—the member for Riverton made these comments as well—that lifestyle villages do not have the same pressures. There is no need for a primary school close to a lifestyle village, given that most people in lifestyle villages are older. There needs to be more flexibility in the approach taken to caravan parks than there has been in the past. Without that increased flexibility, there will always be this pressure on the development rights of the owners of the park rather than the needs of the tenants in the park. They are the ones whom we should be putting first in our mind.

The next one I will draw attention to is recommendation 29, which states —

In priority tourist regions, the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Local Government consider purchasing the development rights of privately owned parks on strategic sites in order to ensure their continuing use as caravan parks and camping grounds.

As I understand the member for Rockingham’s earlier remarks about when a former government purchased a caravan park and whether a government should do that, another approach is to say that when a caravan park has been zoned for tourism, without changing the zoning, all the tenants can be evicted and something new built in its place. Instead, pay the landowners a fee so that they do not have that right in the future. That could be done in areas such as Mandurah, Karratha or Broome. There are a lot of places around the state in which that could be done so that people have to buy not the whole of the value of the land, but only the value of the development right.

Mr T.R. Buswell: The other way to do that is for the government to purchase the land, and then to impose the development condition and then sell the land.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Absolutely. If the minister is going to do that, he has my support. I do not often say nice things about the member for Vasse, but I made the comment previously that I thought his handling of the interdepartmental working group was done well. Sometimes these things do get done properly.

Mr T.R. Buswell: The government can buy the land, which is the ultimate form of compensation, and then we do one of two things: we can either keep the land and operate it through Homeswest —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Minister, could I go on because I have limited time? I have to get out of here in a few minutes. I am not disagreeing with the minister. He can talk about it later. I am sorry about that.

These are just some alternatives. The next one I draw attention to is recommendation 31, which states —

The Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Tourism ensure that Local Government Authorities provide for the zoning of new caravan parks as ‘Caravan Park and Camping Ground’ within their town planning schemes,

The point here is that if the local governments zone caravan parks like future caravan parks—that is, as tourism facilities—London to a brick in 20 years it will not be a caravan park. A developer could come along and say to a local government, “Isn’t this a great idea? I’m going to build a caravan park. Aren’t I being generous?” If the local government says, “No worries; here’s your tourism precinct”, that land will not stay as a caravan park in the long term. These are all small ways of helping long-term tenants. None of the things that I have mentioned will solve the problems for long-term tenants in caravan parks and lifestyle villages immediately.

One of the main things that need to change is the attitude of the owners. As a member of Parliament I spoke to many people during the inquiry. Some park owners were cooperative and helpful and gave their residents fixed-term leases and were generous in the way they approached them. Quite frankly, I met some others, whom I will not name, whose behaviour was disgraceful. They would say that they would not give a long-term lease because they were trying to keep the cost down for the tenant. That was rubbish. It was not about that; they were trying to keep the rights of the landlord above the rights of the tenant. It is never in the interest of the long-term caravan

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park resident not to have a fixed-term lease. Quite frankly, those sorts of attitudes in which landlords are trying to reserve every right they can so that their development rights, their interests and their ability to discipline the tenants are kept paramount and are not in the interests of the caravan park resident, are disgraceful. They are cheating and lying to some of the most vulnerable people in our community, and it is wrong. A lot of things have been tried elsewhere. Some of those things may not work in the way people expect. There are problems if we take property rights away from landlords. I am not saying that that would automatically work. People who run a business such as a caravan park have to accept that the people who live in those parks are people, and they need to protect their interests.

MS A.S. CARLES (Fremantle) [5.26 pm]: I applaud the opposition for bringing this motion before the house today. I strongly support the members who have spoken, particularly the member for Mandurah and the points that he has made. I, too, have been lobbied by constituents in Fremantle. Today I would like to raise the specific case of the Fremantle chalet village, which is in my electorate, as the permanent residents are facing special issues and particular uncertainty at the moment with redevelopment on the cards.

The Fremantle chalet village was developed during the America's Cup yacht series in the 1980s to accommodate the influx of temporary residents to Fremantle. In preceding years, approval was given by the City of Fremantle, which owns the South Fremantle tip site, to integrate long-term residents into park homes. Many people have lived there for more than 20 years. Throughout this period very little regard was given to the health implications of the long-term tenancy on an unremediated landfill site where waste is regularly exposed during site works and gardening. In 2003 a researcher interviewed one of these residents. It was recorded in the *Journal of Rural and Remote Environmental Health*. The long-term park resident talked about the fact that the residents could not grow any vegetables on the site. She said that when a gas company supplied gas to the homes and started digging in the ground, all sorts of smells and wastes were exposed. People had car bodies and hospital syringes exposed in their front gardens. She said that the residents are very aware that they are the only people in Western Australia living on a landfill site. This has created quite a culture of fear within the residents who live there. They are afraid that if they speak out about the contamination, they may be moved on and put in the too-hard basket.

I have also been contacted by residents about the recent parliamentary inquiry. Four issues came up. One was the issue of eviction without reason that the member for Mandurah mentioned. The majority of park residents in my park are in receipt of Centrelink payments, so they are not wealthy people by any means. They certainly do not have the necessary moneys to pay for relocation. They have no fixed-term leases. I agree with members opposite who have been talking about five-year leases as a minimum. At least that is a starting point. There is no compensation to assist if these people are asked to move on. The rent increases need to be consumer price index controlled. As I have mentioned, many of these residents are on Centrelink payments. They are finding that their rent relief has been exhausted and they have to use pension moneys to top up their rent. This leads to other requirements such as medications, food et cetera being cut back.

I want to give a direct quote from a woman who emailed me in January. She said —

We are desperate for some sence of security ...

We are permanent residents not itinerants, we own our homes, we rent the land. We need somewhere secure to live just like other WA residents. We paid for our homes believing we were helping ourselves to live independently in a manner that suited our needs and did not place too much of a drain on State services.

She makes a very good point. Life in her caravan park is a very efficient lifestyle. She lives close to the shops, close to South Beach and close to public transport, and she is a very little drain on the state. I saw on the internet today a two-bedroom park house at Fremantle Village for sale at the going rate of \$65 000. Clearly, if people have lived there since the America's Cup period and all they have is \$65 000, that will not buy them a house anywhere in Perth. This will therefore create huge problems for these people when they are asked to move.

That brings me to what is currently going on at the site. The Cockburn coast district structure plan is in process, and the Minister for Planning recently tabled in Parliament the metropolitan region scheme amendment. This land covers the Fremantle chalet village. I have made a submission to the government urging it to take into account the residents of the Fremantle chalet village and to not allow the current owner to evict them, which looks like the current plan. The government has two options that would be fair. It could buy the Fremantle chalet village from the owner, remediate it and clean it up to a suitable standard for residential purposes and then relocate the permanent residents there. Alternatively, if the government does not want to do that, it could provide land within the Cockburn coast district structure plan site. There is a very large swathe of land between South Beach and Port Coogee that is currently being developed for residential purposes. There is no reason why the

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permanent residents from the chalet village could not be accommodated within that land. In fact, residents from other caravan parks around the state could also be accommodated in this very large strip of coastal land that is near public transport, shops and vibrant communities. I therefore urge the government to look closely at this group of residents. Many of them are on Centrelink payments, they do not have options to move, and at best they could sell their chalet for \$65 000. That will not buy them a home. In all fairness, the government needs to accommodate them.

MR A.J. WADDELL (Forrestfield) [5.32 pm]: We have been here before when I stood and spoke in this place 18 months ago. I brought up a grievance with the then Minister for Housing, who coincidentally is the current Minister for Housing, and raised my concerns and fears about some constituents of mine. Those constituents were residents of Springvale Village Caravan Park. I said at that time that these people faced an uncertain future. They had heard rumours and speculation that their park would be sold out from underneath them and that they all would become homeless. At that time they had received no notice of eviction. They had no information whatsoever on what was going to happen to them. The minister listened to my concerns and told me that the government had a plan to establish new parks and new long-stay sites whereby it could deal with this problem. At the time I think I expressed concern that it would not be soon enough for the residents of Springvale caravan park. Unfortunately, I can tell the house today that not a single person who lived in Springvale caravan park still lives there. That place is now completely closed and all the residents have moved on. But the problem is not just that the caravan park has closed; a lot of people considered it their home. A lot of people had their community and their friends in that park. There were people who had lived there for near on 20 years. I spoke of Irene and Gerald Eggleston, who were 81 and 83 years old respectively. They had lived there for 16 years and very much relied on the community around them. They very much relied on their neighbours. During the relocation period, I heard stories of residents who had disabilities and who did not have family they could lean on. In one instance, which I was very touched by, one neighbour who had luckily managed to obtain some Homeswest accommodation went to a disabled resident and said, "I have a spare room. You can come and live with me." That is the kind of community that was destroyed at that time when the developer decided that enhancing his bottom line was more important than the people who lived there. I therefore grieved in 2009 about that and we did everything we could at the time to assist those people in Springvale. The Department of Housing came around and assisted eligible people relocate into a Homeswest home. All sorts of programs sprang up that we discussed and we had meetings and so forth. But at the end of the day, what did we do for those people? I would say that they probably feel today that we did very little for them.

So, here we are 18 months later having the same discussion yet again. Every member of this place talks about this problem in such eloquent terms as though it were a terrible problem that we intend to get on top of. I wonder whether the people in the public gallery believe us. I wonder whether they believe that we intend to do something about this problem, when clearly we have failed to do anything about it. We spent the last few weeks debating the changes in law that we need to bring about so that the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting can be held in Perth. We stopped all processes of Parliament to ensure that the Queen will be looked after and that she will be safe, but what are we doing about the real people who live in our communities? The reality is that we have failed them. We have failed them miserably. We need more than just words. We need some actual action. We do not need thick reports. We need an actual commitment from this government that it will do something.

I remind government members that I am speaking during opposition time. We are forcing the government to the table on this debate. This debate was not brought on by this government of its own free will. This government is being dragged kicking and screaming to the point of doing the right thing. I hope with all my heart when we hear members say, "This is a terrible problem and we need to fix it, and here is an idea that I've got and I'm throwing that in the wind to correct it", that we are hearing those words with all seriousness. Seriously! This is the Parliament of Western Australia. This is the people's Parliament. We could pass laws this week that would change zoning. We could pass laws this week that would deal with the closure of caravan parks. There would be complications and there would be difficulties, but we have to demonstrate that we have a will to do it.

Back in February this year I received a letter from Brian Sargent, president of the Park Home Owners Association WA. He outlined to me the problems of a lot of people who are seniors and who live in the parks, and how they really feel that they have the sword of Damocles hanging over their head. One line stood out for me in the letter, which reads —

You might say to yourself why are we hearing all this again.

The answer to that is that many W.A. Senior Citizens who have been desperately hoping for help from the Government and its' Agencies during the past few years, are not being helped by anyone and what

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is even worse is that no one seems to care what happens when the developers move in. It is no good telling us that the Park dwellers chose that particular way of living, we are well aware of this.

It goes on. The point is that these people are hurting, and we are not delivering and not looking after their interests.

A lot of members have spoken today about how many people in the parks have financial pressures, about how they rely on government payments and about how they face all sorts of financial difficulties. It is very easy to paint people who choose to live in caravan parks as some sort of charity case that we need to fix. It is not a charity case; these are people who have chosen a way of life. I found myself thinking about that when I first started looking into this matter, and I had a funny revelation when I was preparing for today; that is, I had actually lived in a caravan park as a long-stay resident! When my father divorced my mother, he moved to the eastern states, set himself up in a caravan park in Victoria and lived there for quite a large number of years. Every summer holiday I would go to live with him for the couple of months of the summer break. I would live in his home in the park. It never occurred to me that I had spent a significant period living in a caravan park, because it was not a park; it was my father's home. It was where my dad lived. He took pride in his home and the way it presented. He had a good relationship with his neighbours and it was a good place to live. We should protect that; we should realise that people in parks may have other options, but that they have chosen a way of life that is not a bad one. I dare say that everyone who lives in a park home has a far smaller carbon footprint than any of us who live in our brick and tile dwellings. They have adopted a lifestyle that is positive for the environment, and we should recognise that and encourage people to go down that path.

The other issue I want to examine is lifestyle villages. It seems that as caravan parks have disappeared, more and more lifestyle villages have sprung up, and they have certainly sprung up throughout my electorate. As the member for Riverton indicated, they tend to be dominated by particular subgroups such as the over-50s. Mark my words; in 20 years someone will be standing in this place complaining about the problems with lifestyle villages. We are setting up the same circumstances in which people do not necessarily have control over the land on which their house stands. That will create a problem. If we are to move forward and deliver proper housing to the people of WA, we need to change the way we think about housing; we need to change our options. But we need more than just rhetoric, we need more than desk thumping and we need more than reports; we need some action. I urge the government not to make more empty promises, but to actually do something and to tell the people up there in the gallery when it is going to do it.

MR P.T. MILES (Wanneroo) [5.42 pm]: When I was first elected in 2008, this issue was not on my horizon. I had not heard of any issue to do with caravan park home owners. However, within two weeks of taking up my office in Wanneroo, I probably had 50 or 60 people come by to say that they had been given notice to vacate the Kingsway Tourist Park. That park is made up of two sections; it has a long-stay section and a tourist section. It is a very profitable park. It is at the bottom of Kingsway, near Wanneroo Road and gets a lot of money from visiting netball, rugby and soccer clubs that come to the local sporting fields to play the Wanneroo clubs, and also from people from the regions. It is far from a tourist park that is losing money; it is quite profitable. But the owner decided that he no longer wished to have long-term residents. He misrepresented the fact that he was going to close the park and sell the land. In fact, that was stated on the residents' eviction notices. It was quite painful. I visited quite a few people. I know that a few people in the public gallery used to live at Kingsway and they have moved to other places such as the Cherokee Village Mobile Home and Tourist Park, and Northam and Moora—quite a few moved up to Moora. The government was only able to help by giving a small contribution of \$2 000 to \$3 000 to ease some of the financial burden of the relocation. We know that that was not enough. It cost anything up to \$60 000 for some people to relocate their homes, and that was for those homes that could be moved. Some of those homes had been in that park for so long that they were in such a state that they could not be moved; they were fit only for binning and were taken to the local landfill sites.

In my electorate of Wanneroo, there is a substantial number of new-style lifestyle villages. There are currently two of those, and a third one is going through the process of being set up at the back of Wanneroo, off Pinjar Road. There are also three caravan parks in my electorate at the moment. One is the Lakelands Leisure Village on Sydney Road, which is a very nice park that has been there quite a long time. It was originally part of the Fleetwood group. It is run, owned and operated by a family who lives on the site. It is an absolutely great site to visit and a lot of people are there. Only about 100 site owners are there at the moment. Another caravan park is on the corner of Ocean Reef and Wanneroo Roads, and it is a strata title caravan park. It was set up in the 1980s. That park has its problems and issues as well, because not everybody in that particular park owns the land—some do; some do not. The legislation regarding those tenants is very unclear, because they do not fall under the Strata Titles Act, the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act or the Residential Tenancies Act. Over recent months, we have discovered, with new tenants moving into that park, that the Caravan Parks and Camping

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Grounds Act is full of holes when applied to that park. I have been in talks with Hon Simon O'Brien, the Minister for Commerce, about that. The last caravan park I will talk about is the Wanneroo Caravan Park. It is an original caravan park from the town site days. It was initially intended for holiday-makers but, over time, long-term mobile home owners have moved in and are living there quite happily.

The issue with some of the older parks is that they are not up to acceptable standards. The Kingsway, Wanneroo, Ocean Reef and Lakelands parks are still operating on bore water; they are not connected to mains water. Therefore, they have to deal with all their water, waste and related issues on a weekly basis. The Wanneroo park home site is absolutely gross. In fact, we had to get the Department of Health out there a couple of weeks ago. There have been bashing there and all sorts of stuff. But we must try to keep this park home open; we cannot shut it down for the very reason that everybody in this Parliament has been talking about—these people have nowhere else to go. The local authority, the City of Wanneroo, owns a park home site in Quinns Rocks–Mindarie, but it does not want any more people on that site. It sees the high value in the land and wants to sell it. Therefore, the City of Wanneroo is waiting for the few people now living there to move out one by one. It buys any property there and then lets the place stay dormant. As the member for Mandurah said, the local government should be made to play a bigger role. I do not think it should be a matter of asking the City of Wanneroo any more; it is clear that it wants to sell this land and make a profit. I realise that the city can then turn around and say that it wants to reduce rates or build a library or something like that, but these sites were there first. The Quinns Rocks site has been there for a long time. Because the site borders Mindarie, it obviously has million-dollar views, but these sites should be retained. They should be locked away under the Planning and Development Act so they cannot be changed. As everybody has been saying, the land tax has been removed from caravan parks. The government is trying to give incentives to the park owners to enable them to stay on these sites and keep them operating. We need to try to encourage local governments to reduce rates; after all, local governments do not do anything for these sites. They do not provide bin refuge or anything like that. That is all picked up and paid for out of the rent and the strata fees that these people pay each week.

I was at the last Park Home Owners Association meeting and gave the people at that meeting a couple of commitments. We are now moving ahead with some of those commitments. One of those commitments I gave was that Minister O'Brien would visit the Lakelands caravan park in May to see some of the park home residents and get a true understanding from his point of view of what a non-lifestyle village is like. We need to distinguish between a lifestyle village and a non-lifestyle village. I believe that the Lakelands Leisure Village on Sydney Road is one of the finest private non-lifestyle villages that I have seen, apart from the National Lifestyle Villages, but that is operated entirely differently because it is a big multinational corporation that offers 60-year leases. That is not to say that it does not have its day-to-day and week-to-week issues. I get enough complaints from those residents, whether it is about a firebreak issue or a rear gate that was not unlocked on time. We get all those sorts of complaints. The original park home owners were the Kingsway Tourist and Caravan Park, the Lakelands and the Wanneroo Caravan Park home owners. A member said earlier that they made these types of places viable in the early 1980s. Back then, caravan parks were closing down a lot faster than today because no-one was travelling intrastate for tourism or camping; they were flying to Bali and other places. The caravan parks were losing money because it was no longer a cheap family holiday. To make it viable, someone in the government of the day came up with the idea of having long-term residents so that people did not have to keep moving around the park and pretending they had been there for only three or four nights at a time. The Kingsway caravan park owners used to change everyone's number so that it looked as though the residents had left and come back to a different site. We have moved on from those days. This is a much different time.

When I gave a grievance in December 2009 to the then Minister for Housing, the member for Vasse, he seriously took on that issue and pushed to set up a ministerial body to find sites throughout the metropolitan area. That has been sorted out and two sites have been chosen. One is south of the river and the other north of the river. However, those two sites cannot be the be-all and end-all. We need more than just those two sites. I would like more sites to be set aside. The Pilbara Cities program could be replicated in some of the northern and southern suburbs. I believe that it could work down here and that is how we can create more affordable housing and help some of these residents secure their long-term futures.

I will put it on the record that when I was at the last Park Home Owners Association meeting a few weeks ago, Bob Kucera was there as a representative of the Council on the Ageing. He is getting ministers involved and is helping to get some amendments up in this house and hopefully passed through the upper house. I learnt from Bob that this house agreed to pass the Residential Parks (Long-Stay Tenants) Bill 2005 pretty much intact without any amendments, and that everyone in this house was happy to do that. However, for some reason, Hon Kate Doust, who was the parliamentary secretary at the time, moved a load of amendments in the upper house that stripped out the provisions that ensured the long-term viability to allow these people to remain in their

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homes. That is the sort of thing that can happen. If we make amendments to an act in this place, we must ensure that the upper house sticks to the rules. The provisions of the previous residential parks bill that gave people long-term stability were taken out. I caution everyone to look at those things that might get amended in the upper house. I have seen the transcripts, which the park home owners are quite willing to send to anyone who wants to read them. I support the motion and I hope that the rest of my colleagues will follow suit.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston) [5.55 pm]: I will not speak on this motion for as long as some other members. Although some very pertinent points have been made, in the meantime, people are living in fear and uncertainty, which is very unfair. Today the Minister for Housing can take away some of those fears, even if it is only for the short term. That needs to be done. The Preston Beach Caravan Park in my electorate was closed down. The Minister for Housing might want to take up this matter with the Shire of Waroona, which is considering re-establishing the caravan park at Preston Beach. Reserve land at the front of Preston Beach is used as a pick-up point for pruning clippings from around the town. It is an excellent site. Some of the problems could be fixed by the departments working together.

There are many facets to the issue of permanency and whether we look after tourists or semi-permanent residents. I was a member of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee. That committee identified in its report into the provision, use and regulation of caravan parks and camping grounds in Western Australia that we cannot make a blanket rule on all caravan parks. We need to move forward. It is unfortunate that we have not done that at great speed. The last time I spoke in here on exactly the same issue, I apologised to the people because we had not moved forward. I thought at that time that we were going to take the bull by the horns and give it a shake, but, unfortunately, here we are again and another park is under threat and more people are being displaced from their permanent residence. That it is not good enough. Western Australia is facing issues relating to Homeswest houses and also population growth. We must work with these people. The variations are what get me. The Serpentine Falls Caravan Park on the South Western Highway is on a sprawling paddock. People live there because it is cheap, it is not far from the town and they have security. I am from Collie and have travelled on the South Western Highway for many years. At first I wondered why people would want to live there. There were only about half a dozen permanent park homes in the paddock at that time. The area has now grown to nearly 15 or 20 acres of parkland where people have put down their roots and said, “This will do me. I don’t have a huge mortgage over my head. I am able to manage with the money I’ve got and I like it.” It is suburbia, to some degree, but it is also the country. It is not far to the beach and now, because of the freeway, it is not far to go to the city to get medical treatment or to go shopping. Again, we must look at the variation. The Economics and Industry Standing Committee’s report found that communities grow when residents are given permanency. Augusta is one example. The Shire of Augusta–Margaret River has said that it does not want permanent residents living in the caravan park now and is moving them into the backblocks. That has upset many people in that area. Mr Kevin Garvy, who was living there at the time, was quite a bit older than his wife. He said to me, “Mick, it doesn’t matter what they do; it will not help me, but can we do something so my wife has permanency in the later years of her life?” Unfortunately, he has passed on. I have not caught up with his wife lately, but she is probably living with the same type of fear as some of the people who are in the public gallery. It is not fair to put that type of pressure on a person in their final days of living.

It is not about having a go at the government; it is about how we fix it. How do we get it moved on? A great point was made about how we can change the rules very quickly to help other parts of the state, yet this issue has just bumbled along and bumbled along. We need to do something about it. Waterloo Village Caravan Park is also in my electorate. Some of the people there just panicked. They sold at a very low price and decided to move. The owners of the park decided that, no, they were not going to sell, and that the family would take over the caravan park. Some of those people who shifted emailed me. They were travelling around New South Wales and were in no permanent place. They were quite happy in their two-bedroom park units, which were very well set out. I visited them, and it was a very good community. They were worried about each other. When there is that uncertainty, there is also a brittleness that comes into the community. We need to take away that uncertainty.

We need to identify land very quickly and give assistance to those people. I think it is now about \$50 000 per unit for the cost of drainage and setting up the infrastructure at a caravan park. Nowadays it is not just a matter of putting up a set of toilets and knocking up a few gravel roads; there is far more involved than that and it needs to be kept at that standard. We need to get on with it—that is the crux of the matter. We can talk for many hours in here, but if we do not do something, we are full of it. We are letting down the people who have come here and asked for help. I am pleading with members from both sides of this house to just get on and give these people some permanency. If there is no permanency at an existing site, let us give them somewhere to go. I think that is very important for their future.

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MS A.R. MITCHELL (Kingsley) [6.01 pm]: I am pleased to rise to speak to this motion, because I am probably one of the few members who have had an increase in the number of park homes in their electorates over recent years. I will be honest: it has happened because of a closure in another area. I was a beneficiary of the closure of Kingsway Tourist Park. I was very fortunate that in my electorate Cherokee Village Tourist Park had planned to develop further and increase its capacity in the years to come. Fortunately, to the credit of the owners and the management, they decided that the need existed now and they moved quickly and at great cost to ensure that they could provide an additional 25 sites for people from the Kingsway Tourist Park.

I have seen what people go through when they go through that move. I saw the stress that it caused people. I saw almost a sense of hopelessness on many occasions, but I saw many other things too. I saw a strength, I saw people working together and I believe I saw a community that became stronger. The people from Cherokee were quite strict; they set some pretty high standards. They insisted on certain things meeting their standards. They met with the people; they communicated with them often. It was quite a good and strong relationship, but it was not as simple as saying, “Just come in here and get started.” They set some very high standards and they made sure that the people who indicated that they wished to move basically a couple of kilometres down the road knew exactly what was required and how it would operate.

They could not always get the development completed in the time specified, but I appreciate that negotiations occurred so that there was only the one move; there were not two moves. I am very fortunate, because the new people in my electorate who came from Kingsway Tourist Park to Cherokee Village Tourist Park have really strengthened the community within Cherokee. I can very proudly say that the standard at Cherokee tourist park has lifted and the community within Cherokee is a lot stronger. I applaud the people who have gone there and the work they have done to support each other. If someone did struggle to get things just right, people pitched in and helped. The vegetable gardens within the park homes are just outstanding. I am probably fortunate; I have seen the good side. But I know what people went through, and I know that there are other people who really struggled because their future was not so secure.

One of the things I have picked up during this time is that I do not think there is a simple answer. We have heard from a number of members the variations of how things operate in different locations. I hate to say this but I think we will see more of these closures because of the locations of the parks and on how things have changed over recent years. They are commercial entities; Cherokee Village Tourist Park is a commercial entity. The managers and the owners had this concept of what they were looking for, but they wanted a balance within their development. They wanted some short-term and they wanted some long-stay residents.

Those are the things I would plead with the minister to consider so that we do not rush in and make mistakes. Obviously we thought that the legislation brought in previously covered everything, and it did not. I do not want to see people again go through what they have recently been through. We need to be diligent in our preparation of the next phase. We need to be innovative in developing a concept for the land that is set aside for that and looking at the zoning, because I think the current zoning is going to be a huge issue for years to come. I think we need to be conscious of it. It is a viable, community-based option, and I think it is something that we need in our society, but we need to do it properly and we need to make sure that we do not give people a false hope or a feeling that we are going to solve this next month. We need to make sure that we have some options, and we need to set them in place. I do not want to see people go through again what they have been through because we did not quite get it right. I do not want to wait too long for things to happen, but I am very conscious that we need to get things pretty well set aside so that other people do not experience what some people are experiencing now.

I know the member for Mandurah is facing some of those issues. I have seen what some people have gone through. I want to get it right, and I want to make sure that we cover all aspects of that legislation. I think the member for Wanneroo raised a couple of points that we need to be very conscious of. I certainly support the motion that we need to progress this matter sooner rather than later, but I would also add that I want to see it done properly in this time and place.

MR J.E. McGRATH (South Perth) [6.07 pm]: I rise to speak as someone who does not have any caravan parks in his electorate. Mind you, I am told there was one down on Como beach for many years, and I am sure it would have been a great caravan park. However, like a lot of caravan parks in our state, it disappeared as developers moved in, because the land became too valuable.

I also was a member of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee that looked at the situation of caravan parks in Western Australia. The last time I spoke about this issue I mentioned that I had never actually had a holiday in a caravan park, but I forgot to mention that when I was a very small boy, my father and my mother

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lived in a caravan park at Coogee Beach. I am not sure that it is still there. My father was an electrician working at the South Fremantle power station and that was their first home.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Member, as a farm boy, I once had a holiday in a caravan park in your electorate, the Como caravan park.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: The Como caravan park I was just talking about.

Mr E.S. Ripper: It was a very enjoyable holiday.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I am sure it was, but the caravan park is not there any more.

Our inquiry, if I remember rightly, was based more around the fact that caravan parks were disappearing in Western Australia. It was a way of life for Western Australians to have a cheap holiday, which we did. And most of those caravan parks were in coastal towns like Mandurah, Bunbury and Busselton all the way down the coast. What we have seen, as other members have alluded to, is that with the rising cost of land these parks have become prime real estate, and so many of them have disappeared. There was a concern in the community that that cheaper family holiday would no longer be available to Western Australians. We as a committee thought that was something that the government should act on. The government should set aside land and make sure that there would always be caravan parks into the future. I remember discussing that with the member for Vasse at the time because he indeed has quite a few caravan parks in his electorate. As part of the process that we went through—the member for Riverton was the chair of the committee—the issue of people who were permanent residents in caravan parks was raised with us. As the member for Wanneroo also mentioned, the people who took up permanent residency in a lot of these caravan parks were welcomed by the operators because although caravan parks in, say, Mandurah would be full to the rafters in the summertime during the Christmas holidays, no-one would be staying there in the middle of winter. Therefore, the permanent residents kept a lot of these caravan parks viable at a time when they were not really profitable businesses.

I believe that we are in a very, very difficult situation today because we are going through a transition period. I do not believe that in 20, 30 or 40 years people will move into a caravan park to become a permanent resident in a caravan; I think that times will change. However, we are in a transition period, so I think we need to do something to protect existing caravan park residents who want some security for their future. I am very confident that the minister, the member for Vasse, will do something because I think that this minister has a track record of rolling up his sleeves; when he sees an issue, he tries to achieve an outcome.

One of the big disappointments that we found as a committee was that no department wanted to take ownership of the caravan park issue. The Department of Planning, the Department of Local Government and Tourism Western Australia did not want to know about caravan parks. Tourism WA wanted to get the high-end tourists from Asia staying in the five-star hotels. We could see this great potential for tourists from interstate—the grey nomads travelling around Australia—stopping at caravan parks, and we had evidence that there were no places for them to stay. We thought that at least Tourism WA would look at ensuring that caravan parks were available for these people. Therefore, there was a problem with departmental inactivity or disinterest and that was a real issue.

We went to the Turner Caravan Park in Augusta that is owned by the shire. This was a big issue there. However, they told us that the permanent residents would not be moved off the site. We saw where they lived and they had great little huts and caravans that they turned into lovely little residences with gardens and pot plants and everything. The residents were concerned that they would be thrown out. We raised it with the council and it said, “No, these people will be able to stay; we’re not going to move them on.” The issue that I raise now is that I think that we need some sort of moratorium to protect existing residents.

Another problem our committee found was that no-one from any department could tell us the number of caravan parks and how many people live in caravan parks. We could not get a breakdown of the number of tourists who stayed at caravan parks and the number of permanent residents. There was a minefield of misinformation. I think that is something that happened over the years; people just thought, “Oh, well, they’re caravan parks.” Governments tried to do a little here and there to make some changes and probably a lot of them were well-meaning endeavours, but I think that most of the members in this place today have said that, obviously, there are still some problems. That will be the challenge for the minister.

I have confidence that the minister will at least address this issue. I think that we need to find out how big this problem is, who the residents are and what the future is for some of these parks. Does the government have to get involved and buy some parks? Which parks would the government buy? There is a huge task ahead of whichever department takes this issue on. I think it has to be done. I think the people in the gallery today have

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shown that they are really concerned about this. I congratulate the member for Mandurah because I think he is an outstanding representative for his people and in this case he is also representing people, no doubt, from outside his electorate and, indeed, from around the state. Congratulations, member for Mandurah. He has had a lot of support from this side of the chamber on this issue today and I think we all —

Mr M. McGowan: What about the rest of us? Are we all outstanding?

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Members opposite are, but he is my fellow Whip, so I have a stronger bond with him than I have with the member for Rockingham! I told the member for Mandurah before that he is a bit like Chris Judd—he can draw a crowd. Whenever the member for Mandurah has a good speech to give or a meaningful project, he always draws a crowd.

With that, I think that something has been achieved today. The member for Carine will say a few words, and I am very interested to hear what the minister has to say.

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn) [6.15 pm]: My contribution to this debate will be short because I have guests in the gallery whom I have already arranged to meet. I want to put on the record my views about this matter, which I raised numerous times when I had shadow ministerial responsibility for this area.

There are three caravan parks in my electorate, Cockburn—namely, Woodman Point Holiday Park, Coogee Beach Holiday Park and Jandakot Caravan Park. Woodman Point Holiday Park and Coogee Beach Holiday Park are leased from the Department of Environment and Conservation by the Aspen Group as part of the Woodman Point A-class reserve. Therefore, there is no threat to residents of those parks being moved on.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Member, I suspect that will be the model that eventually most caravan parks will be.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I think that is a good model; to look at that land that is already part of a reserve that can be leased to —

Mr T.R. Buswell: It takes the value of the land out of the proposition.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: It also provides a level of certainty for the residents who move there. The minister is right: it takes the value of the land out of the equation and stops speculators from trying to drive people out because of the increasing land value.

Jandakot Caravan Park is subject to possible change in the future, not at the very moment, but it has been surrounded by suburbia so we know that ultimately there will be pressure on that caravan park.

As the minister knows from his previous role as Minister for Commerce, the Park Home Owners Association has raised this issue of the needs and desires of long-stay residents in caravan parks. Firstly, it is about their certainty of investment in their home. As the minister knows, those caravans are not caravans as such. They are not mobile homes; they are homes. The only way those homes would be mobile is if we were to pick them up and put them on the back of a low-loader. They are large permanent dwellings —

Mr T.R. Buswell: Some wouldn't even survive that.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is right, because of the way in which they have been constructed. However, they are large permanent dwellings that cost between \$110 000 and \$250 000, depending on where the home is, and it is literally a person's home. It is a place that is affordable for those people who are downsizing and whose family have left home. These parks are a great community. If members have ever been to them, they know that the social fabric of those parks is fantastic and that they are a community, made up of mainly elderly retired residents. These residents need certainty for their investment, but they do not have any certainty. They do not even have the same certainty for the rental of their piece of land that people get from the Residential Tenancies Act for the rental of private accommodation, for example. One of the key issues the Park Home Owners Association has called on—which I believe was in the bill but was taken out, as the member for Wanneroo said, by way of amendment in the upper house—is the issue of eviction without reason. That is in the act. I could not point to any use of “eviction without reason” in my constituency, but I know there have been examples of that used elsewhere in Western Australia. It is that threat that hangs over their heads they wish to remove.

The other consistency needed for investment in property is the need for a fixed-term lease. At the end of the day, what are people renting? They are only renting the piece of land under their home. It is not, as I have said, a piece of property that can be hitched up behind a four-wheel-drive vehicle and driven off up the road. It is not just a caravan; it is a large immobile permanent home. Residents need security of tenure over the piece of land under their home. That needs to be achieved by way of a fixed-term lease.

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When residents are threatened with removal from their property as a result of the sale of a caravan park, what the act does not deal with, and what the Park Home Owners Association is calling for, is adequate relocation compensation. If another place cannot be found, caravan owners need a place to live. In locations where caravan parks have closed down within this government's term, I think it was the minister who said, "We'll have to find Homeswest accommodation for these people."

Mr T.R. Buswell: As I said to the member for Rockingham, without trying to be facetious, the facts are that a lot of people actually do not qualify for Homeswest homes.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is right. Their income levels do not allow them to qualify anyway.

Mr J.E. McGrath: It is a lifestyle thing.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That is right. As the member for South Perth points out, it is a lifestyle thing.

Mr T.R. Buswell: Even if the Homeswest home was in a park home, they would not qualify.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I know for a fact they would not qualify anyway because of their accumulated savings. But let us say someone did qualify, they would not want to go into a Homeswest property because of where they are moving from and what they are moving to. They are very happy where they are, in the type of community and environment they live in. If those people cannot be relocated, they need to be compensated for being effectively forcibly evicted from their property and forced into a fire sale of their property, because that is what would happen. If the park home closed down, they would be forced into a fire sale of their permanent property. They would be effectively evicted. The act does not deal with adequate compensation. That is a key issue.

The fourth thing the Park Home Owners Association argues is that rent should be controlled by the consumer price index. Obviously the Caravan Industry Association Western Australia strenuously argued against that view. In a lot of its leases, rent is determined by CPI for one year and then market rate for another. I certainly know that at Coogee Beach and Woodman Point Holiday Parks they have alternate years where they have CPI one year and the market rate for the other. The problem is of course, what is the market rate? Caravan parks in my electorate are right opposite houses in Coogee. Houses in Coogee start at \$1.5 million. So what is the market for a caravan park home in that area? If we took into account the Valuer-General's view, it would be related to the \$1.5 million to \$3 million houses across the other side of Cockburn Road. That is entirely inappropriate.

Residents at Woodman Point Holiday Park were the first in Western Australia to use the Residential Parks (Long-stay Tenants) Act to take the Aspen Group to the State Administrative Tribunal to test the act and to challenge the 14 per cent increase in rent that Aspen decided was the market rate. They won, minister. They did not get exactly what they wanted in terms of a percentage increase, but they certainly got a reduction from the 14 per cent and back payment of rent already paid. Again, people had to find a valuer to determine what an acceptable market rate was in order to determine the rent increase. People should not be put in that position. Retirees and long-term residents of caravan parks should not be put in a position of having to spend a considerable amount of money just to prove what the market rate is over their rent increases. There has to be a better way to do it. The Park Home Owners Association says that the easiest way to do it is to base the rent on CPI.

Another issue is the provision in the act relating to the first right of refusal on the sale of the home to the park owners themselves. The Park Home Owners Association finds that unacceptable and believes that, if on the one hand, park owners and operators are arguing for a market rate in terms of the rent that should be paid, they should also get their nose out of the market for a caravan park home sale by being locked into a first right of refusal to the park operator itself. They cannot have it both ways. That is what the act allows them to do.

I ask that those five key points raised by the Park Home Owners Association be considered at length by the minister. As many members have already said, this has dragged on. It is now four to five years since the act was passed. It really is time to make a change and to deliver certainty for these residents. Thanks.

MR A. KRSTICEVIC (Carine) [6.26 pm]: I would also like to throw my support behind long-stay residents in caravan parks. We have a moral and ethical obligation to protect all Australian citizens. We need to provide the quality of life they deserve. As I have noticed over the past 20 years of my life, we have moved away from caring about people and moved towards profit. There is a big shift out there in the community. Whereas 40 or 50 years ago we cared about each other and made decisions based on our morals and what was right, now we are moving towards a world in which people are putting profit ahead of people. It means that the legislation and our mindset has not moved in that direction quickly enough. Unfortunately, the generations that built this country—the parents, grandparents, and people in their retirement years, who are in the public gallery—are not getting the respect they deserve in terms of the legislation protecting them and their rights. In some respects they are being

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taken advantage of. When people moved into caravan parks, they moved with the right intentions. They were supported by the owners. At the time, as we have heard, the owners could not afford to run these establishments without the support of these people. Now, because of the growing population and values of land, people look at these investments from a completely different perspective in terms of trying to develop them.

I have two caravan parks in my electorate. They are quite expensive pieces of real estate. The “Directions 2031” document refers to half a million more people moving into the Perth–Peel region of this state. That is infill on a massive scale. In 2056, the Perth–Peel region will have another 1.5 million people. As we start getting those sorts of densities, these sorts of land holdings will become immensely valuable. Everyone is in danger in that situation. It is very important for us to take very seriously what we are going to do. We have to remember that we are breaking up communities. We are breaking up people who have lived together for long periods and who have built social networks. These are people who actually exemplify what we used to have as a society and what we have lost in some respects. We need to try to grow those sorts of communities in the rest of Western Australia and the rest of Australia, and really take those good values and examples on board.

I have been to a couple of caravan parks with my family and my children, and we often talk to some of the people who have been living in those parks for a long time, and they give us some advice about what we can see and do. They are very friendly, and they give us a sense of calm and a sense of ease. I think that is part of the reason that people enjoy staying in caravan parks, because apart from meeting people who are transient and moving through those parks, there is also a community that lives there, and we can get a sense of security and a sense of wisdom and history from speaking to those people.

It is very important that owners and developers get the clear message that many of these people have been living in these caravan parks for a long time, and they need to be supported. But we also need to make sure that we take that into consideration in the legislation that we put through this Parliament. All too often we get caught up in the legal framework and in legislative arguments, and in debates about things that are being sensationalised on television or in the press, or are being driven by some community sentiment, and we forget about the silent people in the community who are living their lives and doing the right thing and not necessarily bringing their plight to our attention in a very public way. It is very important that we do not just react to those sorts of situations, but that we listen to people who are genuinely suffering at a time in their lives when they should be comfortable and relaxed and enjoying what is before them. That is very important. We need to do as much as we can, and as quickly as we possibly can. Some of these people are in their 90s. I do not know how much longer they have to live. But it is a very sad situation if they are living with insecurity about whether they will still be in their homes next week or next month or next year. I would not want my parents or my grandparents to have to live in that sort of situation. We all need to reflect on this from personal experience and think about what it would be like if we and our families were experiencing this. I think we would all be outraged and would be trying to improve and change things as quickly as we could. We need to stop and take a breath and look at the community that is around us and the good aspects of it, and do as much as we can to protect that into the future. I want everyone in the gallery to know that I am passionate about doing what I can to influence the minister, and others, to do something about this situation as quickly as we can.

MR T.R. BUSWELL (Vasse — Minister for Housing) [6.33 pm]: I thank members on both sides of the house for the contribution that they have made to this debate this afternoon. This motion feels as though it is a bipartisan grievance in some ways, and that is probably a fair description, because this is a good topic on which to present a grievance in the long tradition of presenting grievances to the Parliament. There is no doubt that this issue is having a significant impact on people’s lives. I have often thought that to use the words “caravan park” during a discussion of this topic is to do a disservice to a lot of people, because we are not talking about caravans; we are talking about people’s homes. That is a very important distinction to make, because although technically we are talking about caravan parks, when we meet people who live in this style of accommodation, we understand that this is not about a caravan; it is about a home and a sense of place and a sense of community within that caravan park. I think that in part explains why this is such a significant issue for so many people.

I do not intend to canvass all the issues that have been raised by members opposite, but I will touch on some. I will then close with some comments about what I intend to do, and by extension what the government intends to do. Some of the comments that have been made by members do not necessarily come within my portfolio responsibility, and I assume that those comments will be picked up by the Minister for Commerce and his department.

The inquiry and report conducted by the Economics and Industry Standing Committee show clearly that caravan parks are under pressure across the state, whether they be caravan parks that are predominantly or exclusively

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used for tourism, or caravan parks that are predominantly or exclusively used to provide long-term residential accommodation. In my view, the report did an excellent job of canvassing that.

The particular type of park that we are talking about today—as has been discussed at length by the member for Mandurah—is regulated under the Residential Parks (Long-stay Tenants) Act 2006. I will make some comments about that shortly. I also need to point out, as I think the issue has been raised, that a number of people who live in park-style accommodation choose to live in lifestyle villages. At this particular juncture, there are not a lot of issues with lifestyle villages per se, and in particular tenure, because they have a different tenure model that is based on a whole-of-life lease. It would be fair to say—I think the member for Mandurah is 100 per cent correct—that the act is not delivering the outcomes that it was intended to deliver. If we read the *Hansard* that describes the passage of this bill through this house, people on both sides thought that this bill would address a lot of the issues that have been raised with all members of Parliament by their constituents. The bill had bipartisan support in this place, and I assume that it did in the other place as well, although I have not read the *Hansard* from the upper house; I try to avoid that. It would also be fair to say that the expectation that was created at the time was that a lot of the issues of tenure would be addressed through the introduction of that legislation. That act deals with a range of factors other than tenure, and in some instances it has had a positive outcome, although not a perfect outcome. However, clearly, that act has not delivered on the expectations of the house. Section 96 of the act reads —

The Minister must arrange for a review of the operation of this Act to be carried out as soon as practicable after the end of the period of 5 years beginning on the commencement of the Act.

I will get advice from my colleague the Minister for Commerce, who has responsibility for this bill, about whether we can conduct that review earlier. I do not see anything in the act that says we cannot do that. If we can conduct that review earlier, I think we should. It is clear that the act is not working to the extent that it should be working, and if changes can be made to the act, we need to look at that now. We will get further advice on that. But hopefully one positive outcome from today is that that review will be brought forward and conducted as soon as possible. I am sure that review will canvass issues such as termination of tenancy, because clearly that is the most significant issue that has been raised. So I provide that advice to the house in the first instance.

I now want to touch on some points that most of the members of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee have raised. The essential issue here is that there is a significant supply constraint on the provision of caravan parks. Many of the existing caravan parks are being turned to other uses, and creating new caravan parks is proving to be quite problematic in a lot of cases. Generally the reason for the closure of caravan parks relates to the opportunity cost of the potential alternate uses of that land. That is the basic, fundamental issue. Historically, caravan parks were located in what were often pristine areas. Land values on the shores of Geographe Bay, in my electorate, have gone up significantly. If there is an increase in land values, the owners of caravan parks are faced with what is in some cases a difficult choice, and that often leads to them selling their caravan park, which is then developed for alternate uses. It is my view that ultimately, in those areas in which land values are high, the only way we will protect the institution of the caravan park, whether it is for tourism or for long-stay, is if there is some form of government ownership; or, as the member for Cannington alluded to, some form of compensation to enable a specific zoning to be placed on a caravan park.

I want to tease out a couple of things around this issue. This is not an easy issue to solve. Again, I reflect on the Shire of Busselton. The Shire of Busselton does not have a caravan park zoning per se. We have a tourism zoning. That means that a lot of caravan parks have been turned into resorts. That is great for the people who have invested in that, and for people who want to stay in a resort. But for people who want to live in a caravan park or visit a caravan park, those caravan parks have gone. However, that is entirely lawful within the existing planning framework. It may well be that some changes are required to the planning framework. However, I do urge some caution. I heard some other members talk about things such as how rent should be restricted to the consumer price index —

Mr M. McGowan: Who said that?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I was not particularly listening. It was a member of the chamber. I do not think the member is here at the moment.

Mr M. McGowan: You must have been listening if you know they're not here!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Fair point.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Someone on your side, by the sound of it.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No, no, I cannot exactly remember —

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Mr M. McGowan: In a manner of speaking!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: — but if they were in this place, I am sure I would recognise them!

If we telegraph those types of signals to the market, there is a real concern about how people who currently own caravan parks could act. We will not introduce retrospective legislation—we could, but we would not.

Mr E.S. Ripper: You could announce that you would legislate with effect from a certain day.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We could, but at the end of the day that would significantly erode a private property right, and, ultimately, some compensation would be paid. It is my view that the level of that compensation would mean that the best thing for the government to do would be to, effectively, acquire the property. What can the government do once it has acquired the property? There are probably a couple of things. One would be to apply a zoning to that property that meant that it could only ever be a caravan park. We could then go back to the market and sell that property. Effectively, the sale price that the government would receive, I imagine, would be less than its purchase price because of the restricted planning that sat around it. We would effectively be paying compensation because of the differential between those two prices. The person who then buys it would be buying it in the safe knowledge that it will only ever be a caravan park. That is one option. The other option would be for the government to buy it and continue to operate it as a caravan park either through an agency such as the Department of Housing, or on a lease basis.

Dr M.D. Nahan: Or through the shires.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Or local governments, yes. This is not something I see the Department of Housing as being a service provider in; I see it as being a facilitator.

I have had discussions with the Director General of the Department of Housing about the department purchasing caravan parks; it is not something he sees as being an absolute priority. I had another discussion with him this afternoon—we will conclude that conversation on Monday—and I am pretty sure that the department will look to acquire some caravan parks. The caveat I put on that statement is that it has to represent reasonable value to the taxpayer; in other words, we would not expect prices to be artificially inflated simply because the government was potentially looking to buy the land. That is a significant policy shift for the government, but it is a step I think we need to take. The member for Rockingham talked about Palm Beach.

Mr M. McGowan: Palm Beach Caravan Park would be expensive, but it has a lot of tenants, so when it is on sold, according to the proposition you just put —

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Possibly.

Mr M. McGowan: — you would probably get quite a good return.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The department has looked at Palm Beach and its response was that it is expensive.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Minister, this is not about providing social housing, is it?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: No, no, but let me continue through.

I am happy for them to have a look at that. Our preference would be to get properties where we could probably provide a mix. In other words, we could provide bays for people who have been displaced to move their vans to, and there is a complication in that that I want to talk about in a second; or we could provide park home-style accommodation for people to access who may well be social housing tenants. That is the model I think we will move to, but we need to do a bit more work on that. I have had discussions with the department about it; as I said, I again spoke to the director general this afternoon about it. The department has also had discussions with the providers of lifestyle villages. In my view, this is a style of accommodation that people desire to live in. As to social housing, it is not for us to exclude that style of accommodation, which, for many people for a whole range of reasons, is incredibly appealing. That process will start, effectively, next week, when I will formalise the instruction to the department to actively seek out a caravan park to buy in the first instance, and then look to others.

Mr E.S. Ripper: The housing department?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The Department of Housing. That will affect net debt, but I am sure the opposition will support us on that.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Well, of course, you will recover some money.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes; in time. I only say that as an aside.

Mr E.S. Ripper: It is a matter of priorities, really.

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Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The other part of the equation is the work being done by the Department of Planning to identify land. As stated by the member for West Swan, my understanding is that there is apparently some land—it may have been Marshall Road—near Whiteman Park, and apparently discussions about that land are moving forward; we are still pursuing that, but it is taking too long. That, I hope, will help address some of the issues out of this debate. However, we have to clearly understand that a lot of people are currently facing some very, very dire predicaments, and these solutions are not entirely going to help them. That is the sad reality, and I am not going to stand and pretend I can solve all of these problems. I have outlined what we will do about a review of the act and that we will look to procure a caravan park and the innovative things we can do with that, but because of the deficiencies in the act, some people are facing some quite dire circumstances. We will continue to work with them where we can. The Department of Housing, I think, does a good job in helping people in a very difficult circumstance to move through that transition. I made the point before that we cannot help everybody by helping them transition to social housing because either they do not meet the criteria, or because they would not go there in a pink fit. I have previously acknowledged that. We will continue to make available—as we did at Kingsway after some representations from the member—an ex gratia or act-of-grace payment to assist people with the move, which I think will help. Because this has happened a couple of times now, we do have some fairly well-established practices to deal with that, but even if we provide caravan parks, a number of people in existing park homes would not be able to move there either because of the cost or because it would be physically impossible to relocate their vans. I think the things I have announced will be steps in the right direction, but I am not sure they will solve everybody's problems. I have heard a figure being bandied around that something like 18 or 20 caravan parks are potentially in this predicament; I do not know if that is still the case.

Mr M. McGowan: If I could just interject; it all depends, because some are zoned in a location where they can be easily redeveloped, and others will be sold as commercial concerns as caravan parks because they are not in a zoning or location where they could be redeveloped. I think you have to pick and choose which ones you buy. I am very pleased that you have said that you're going to follow up the idea of purchasing them and onselling them if necessary.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I acknowledge that this is one of those issues in which a number of government agencies are involved and that it has taken too long to progress towards an outcome, so I will try to fix it. Housing will play a role in that, and Planning can continue to do its work and identify sites. The cheapest option for us is to get undeveloped crown land that is relatively close to services.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Mirrabooka.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Mirrabooka? I am not sure we would get through the community consultation out there with the City of Stirling.

Mr M. McGowan: Shenton Park.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: There may be some land somewhere over there—who knows?

I think the responses I have outlined are sensible, but they are not going to be an immediate short-term cure to those people who are being impacted.

An issue raised in the debate by the members for Mandurah and Kimberley was the issue of termination by park operator without grounds. I am pretty keen for us to look into that; I think I made the point that if members can let me know where that has happened, it will be followed up. The act is very clear about what we expect or anticipate from park owners. We will support this motion, but I would like to move an amendment that has been stimulated by the point raised by the members for Mandurah and Kimberley.

Amendment to Motion

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I move —

That the following words be inserted after “future” —

and the Economics and Industry Standing Committee be requested to consider the appropriateness of undertaking an investigation into all park homes that have been closed or have collectively evicted long-stay tenants since 2006 to ensure compliance with all aspects of appropriate legislation.

As I say, the issue was raised, and I am concerned. I have spoken to the chair of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee and he has said he needs some time to consider that in detail. That is the reason for the wording. I think this will give us an opportunity to perhaps deal with any rogue operators.

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Mr David Templeman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Andrea Mitchell; Mr John McGrath; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Troy Buswell

Dr M.D. Nahan: Kingsway.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Yes; potentially Kingsway or others. The member for Kimberley referred to an operator in Kununurra, and I am pretty keen for the Economics and Industry Standing Committee to look at that. Other examples have been reported on, which this amendment will deal with. A case in point is a caravan park in Port Hedland, and this is exactly the point raised by the opposition. Some people bought that caravan park early in 2009 and, as reported in *The West Australian*, the owner —

... whose company Port Village Accommodation owns the caravan park, told residents he “did not anticipate” anyone would be displaced.

In November that year that company wrote to those people and told them they would have to leave by 6 December. That is one month’s notice. I think that could potentially be in breach of the act. I was very unhappy to read that. That is exactly the sort of behaviour members opposite talked about that takes advantage of people in difficult situations. The owner of the park said he had a right to develop his business. He probably does, but when people do that, they need to do it lawfully. I raise out of interest that story about that caravan park in Port Hedland, which was brought to my attention. The member for Kimberley discussed a situation in Kununurra. I think it is a good idea to look at it. I am sure all members of this house will support that amendment. It is entirely within the spirit of what the opposition is trying to do. I have acknowledged that we need to review the legislation. I said that the Department of Housing will start to look at trying to acquire a caravan park. I am also saying that the behaviour of some park owners may have been less than satisfactory and they may have potentially illegally evicted people. The particular case in Port Hedland was publicised in the newspaper on 17 November 2009 and it is the sort of behaviour that, if it was inappropriate, needs to be investigated. The Economics and Industry Standing Committee, in the first instance, will consider the appropriateness of undertaking that investigation.

With those few words, I offer the government support for the very important motion moved by the opposition in its amended form.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham) [6.52 pm]: I thank all members for their contribution to the debate. I think a lot of people spoke well. I think there was unanimity of opinion across the house that something more needs to be done than has been done to help people who live in caravan parks or park home estates or whatever name we want to give to them. I am pleased that we raised this matter. I think that the action the Minister for Housing is proposing of perhaps purchasing parks that are potentially up for redevelopment and whose residents will lose their homes, and finding an alternative mechanism for managing them, whether it be by Homeswest or by onselling to another operator under the condition that they must in perpetuity be managed as a caravan park, is a good way of resolving the issue. I understand that is what the minister was saying in his earlier remarks. My only problem is that it is not definite. He is saying, “We will work on this”, and so forth. It is not definite, but it is certainly encouraging.

Mr T.R. Buswell: That will definitely be investigated. Provided there is not a blatant effort to gouge money out of the government, we will look at doing it. We cannot do it for every caravan park but we will look at doing it for some well-positioned ones.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I do not want to delay the house, but in my electorate one or two would never be redeveloped for housing because of their zoning. It is not an issue for those; they will continue as caravan parks. One park the minister identified is Palm Beach Caravan Park, which is on prime land for redevelopment. That is the sort of estate I hope the government will seek to purchase and enter into an arrangement with so that someone else will continue to manage it as a caravan park. At the end of the day there might be a slight loss but I certainly think that would be a price worth paying rather than throwing 100 or 200 people out on the street.

It must be said that the opposition’s motion has resulted in this outcome. If the minister was being fair, he would say that the oratory, particularly of the member for Mandurah —

Mr E.S. Ripper: And the member for Rockingham.

Mr M. McGOWAN: No; not me. I am a very humble man, Leader of the Opposition!

Mr T.R. Buswell: Who said that?

Mr M. McGOWAN: People tell me all the time that I have much to be humble about. The oratory of the member for Mandurah has resulted in this good outcome and I think he needs to be congratulated for that, as do other members.

Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Mr David Templeman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Adele Carles; Mr Andrew Waddell; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Mick Murray; Ms Andrea Mitchell; Mr John McGrath; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Mr Troy Buswell

We are open and accountable. We support investigations into issues around the place. I know that the Economics and Industry Standing Committee is a very busy committee. Will it get around to this? Indeed, a motion will be moved tomorrow to delay some investigations it is currently undertaking because it has so much on its plate. If it has time to investigate issues and what have you, I hope it will go about it. I would not support the committee being misused for any particular purpose.

Mr T.R. Buswell: No. That is not my intention.

Mr M. McGOWAN: If it is the minister's intention to misuse it for any political or alternative purpose, it would be true to form, one could say; it would not be something that people would be surprised at the minister doing. But if he is genuine about a worthy issue, the committee might investigate it; nevertheless, this has been a good bipartisan debate. But I think to some degree the minister may have sullied it in the past 10 or 15 minutes with this latest manoeuvre. If the committee wants to examine the issues, it is up to the committee. I am sure the committee will examine the appropriateness of the minister's intent in the amendment. I am sure the members of that committee in particular will not do anything that would sully the committee's reputation. It has done some very good work recently on gas prices. I am sure that, consequent to the manoeuvrings of the Minister for Housing, that committee would not be silly enough to enter into any political witch-hunt or alternative purpose that is contrary to the good way it has been conducting its business in the past few months. In any event, we will not object to this amendment. I am pleased our motion, in a broader sense, has brought an outcome.

I thank all the people in the gallery who have come along and endured three hours of this place. They deserve medals for three hours of endurance, but they should bear in mind that not only the good oratory of the member for Mandurah and other members of this place but also, I think, their attendance might have resulted in some action.

[Applause from the public gallery.]

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am sure they are not clapping the Minister for Housing; I am sure they are clapping me!

Mr R.F. Johnson: You're a humble man.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am a very humble person. They can go home tonight and know that the efforts of their organisation, Park Home Owners Association, and its president, Mr Sargent, and of other people here in coming to see me and the member for Mandurah have resulted in this action. I am sure their attendance has stirred the lumbering beast, the Minister for Housing, into some action. Thank you very much for your attendance.

Amendment put and passed.

Motion, as Amended

Question put and passed.