

With more than 60,000 on the social housing waiting list and the continuing demand on social housing, given the housing affordability crisis and rising levels of homelessness, the Government must not absolve itself from its duty to protect social housing tenants from unnecessary eviction from their social housing tenancies. Last March the Government announced that \$1 billion was to be set aside for housing, but we are yet to see one dollar of it or any documentation about it. We all know that \$20 billion supposedly will be spent on a whole range of infrastructure projects from the sale of electricity, but not one dollar is going towards increasing housing in this State. We know how important it is to care for our tenants and to provide them with a very safe home and shelter. I reiterate that the Opposition supports law-abiding citizens in our social housing network.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Mark Coure and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

**Pursuant to resolution private members' statements proceeded with.**

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### PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON** (Port Stephens) [5.18 p.m.]: Recently I joined representatives of numerous community groups at a rally outside Port Stephens Council who were there to express no confidence in council. It is not a move we took lightly, but the interests of our community were under threat from a council agenda fraught with potential problems. What led us to take that action? The current Port Stephens Council was elected as a result of what was described by the *Newcastle Herald* as "an intricate web of preference deals ... cemented multi-millionaire mayor Bruce McKenzie's leadership". This intricate web delivered him seven out of 10 council seats.

According to the *Newcastle Herald*, of the 66 so-called independent candidates, 32 were aligned and at least eight were funded by Bruce MacKenzie, who was ultimately installed as mayor. This was not his first gig. The *Newcastle Herald* has reported that Mayor MacKenzie was first elected to council in 1968, he was the first and second local councillor to be suspended by a pecuniary interest tribunal, and he has three criminal convictions including assault, negligent driving and failing to stop at the scene of a crime. According to local media, he is a developer and "a self-made millionaire sand miner" but, despite contributing to the campaigns of other candidates during a local government election, no-one has seen fit to hold him or anyone to account. Instead, intimidation, abuse and disrespect has become par for the course in Port Stephens.

I must apologise for the unparliamentary language that I am about to use. Recently, a wheelchair-bound constituent complained to me that the mayor called him a "spastic fucking arsehole" at a public function. Another resident was called a "fucking grub" at a recent community forum. It is offensive language. I have statutory declarations attesting to those events. During the hearing of a joint regional planning panel, I witnessed the mayor shout offensively at a woman in the public gallery whilst the mayor was a member of the panel. But it is much worse than just poor behaviour. *Buildev*, formerly part owned by disgraced businessman Nathan Tinkler, is a company that gained infamy during the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] hearings. The ties to *Buildev* across elected representatives in Port Stephens are longstanding.

Darren Williams is a co-founder of *Buildev* and was best man at the wedding of the mayor's son. Councillor Ken Jordan, the defeated Liberal candidate at the last State election, was best man at Darren Williams's wedding. Former member for Port Stephens Craig Baumann moved to the crossbench after admitting he lodged a misleading electoral funding declaration for his 2007 campaign, concealing significant support from Newcastle developers Jeff McCloy and Hilton Grugeon. He also told ICAC that *Buildev* donated \$10,000 to his 2011 campaign, but the money was refunded. Federal member for Paterson Bob Baldwin was referenced twice during the ICAC Spicer inquiry as being an advocate for *Buildev*. The *Daily Telegraph* reports that he did consulting work for *Buildev* prior to re-entering Parliament in 2001. It has also been reported that a property purchased by Bob Baldwin was bought from him by Darren Williams's wife, who, 10 months later, sold it at a loss.

It is unsurprising that with a history of connections between developers and local elected representatives at all levels of government, a developer mayor who bought his position and his voting bloc on council, and with intimidation and disgusting behaviour by the mayor my community had finally had enough and joined together at the recent council meeting to demand honest governance. The final straw was that the mayor and his voting bloc approved a highly lucrative sandmining lease be transferred at the request of none

other than Nathan Tinkler from one Buildev-related company to another. The original lease was awarded to Buildev against the recommendation of council staff and outside of a tender process in which the mayor's own sandmining company had made a bid. The mayor and his voting bloc also approved the rezoning of 21 per cent of an historic public park for residential development.

Prior to the recent meeting, Port Stephens Council has been responsible for other appalling decisions, many of which have been made against the recommendations of council staff, the Rural Fire Service, Hunter Water and even the Department of Defence. Last week I convened a community forum to inform concerned residents about the mayor's latest business proposal to increase truck movements from his company's sand mine onto the main arterial road in Port Stephens by 200 per cent. At the forum I noticed Mayor Bruce MacKenzie standing next to a man who, prior to the election, sent me a threatening email, shouted at me on pre-poll and whose employees abused me on election day. If these people think they can intimidate me, well think again.

It is not acceptable that people in positions of public office gain advantages that are not available to anyone else, that developer interests continue to prevail over the community's interests, and that some residents of Port Stephens feel they cannot speak or act freely for fear of intimidation or retribution. If Minister Toole is truly committed to his words that "the New South Wales community deserves their councillors to conduct themselves appropriately in the interest of residents at all times" he has no option but to act on the many pleas for assistance that he has received from my community. I am referring these matters to the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC], but there is also an onus on the Minister to ensure that we have a local council that acts in the interests of my community, not an elite club with the interests of just one man and his mates at its rotten core.

### **TRIBUTE TO LERRYN MUTTON, OAM**

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI** (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.24 p.m.]: I offer my condolences to the family of Lerryn Mutton, OAM, a former member of this House, who passed away on 26 July 2015 aged 90. Mr Mutton was the member for Yaralla from 1968 until 1978 and served his constituents with distinction. Prior to his election to Parliament, Mr Mutton served in the RAAF during the Second World War as a fighter pilot. He later wrote a book outlining his wartime experiences, titled *Lest I Forget*. The book was published in 2012. Mr Mutton served on Concord Council as an alderman and later as mayor. In his autobiography he stated:

Politics should be left to the politicians of this State House and Canberra and local government should be kept local and independent.

I have opposed always, in all quarters and at all levels, participation of party politics in local government. No man can serve two masters.

How right he was. Having also served as a councillor and mayor I can categorically say that at the local level party politics should not come into the equation. Mr Mutton and his wife, Mavis, retired to Macmasters Beach on the Central Coast more than 20 years ago where he remained active in the local community in Rotary, the church and various community events. Lerryn Mutton was a man who lived life to the full and in his own words "made every moment count". He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in June 2010. He will be remembered as a hardworking member, devoted family man and as a man who spent his life trying to make a difference. Again I express my sincere condolences to his family, and his many friends and colleagues.

### **MID NORTH COAST FLYING FOX MANAGEMENT**

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY** (Oxley) [5.26 p.m.]: There are continuing issues with flying fox camps in several communities along the mid North Coast. The two key locations that my constituents are concerned about are Rudder Park, East Kempsey, and Gordon Park, Nambucca Heads. I am sure there are more. Those two popular public areas are virtually rendered unusable by the smell, noise and defecation of many thousands of flying foxes in local trees every day. We have all heard of the direct risks to human health posed by the rabies-like lyssavirus and Hendra virus, but we must also appreciate the suffering and anguish of local residents who have no choice but to live next to or under the camps of these animals. Interestingly, it is widely acknowledged that the east Kempsey camp relocated to its current site when the Kempsey bypass roadworks started near the colony's previous camp—that is, the relocation was caused by humans.

The general issue of flying foxes in urban areas has been the subject of a major petition debated in this House and innumerable correspondence to and between local, State and Federal governments. That indicates that the majority of people regard it as untenable and intolerable that ensuring flying foxes have their choice of