LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2009–2010

Zed Seselja MLA (Chair), Caroline Le Couteur MLA (Deputy Chair), Amanda Bresnan MLA, Joy Burch MLA, Brendan Smyth MLA

Mr Michael O'Brien
Director
Ram Constructions
PO Box 92
Mitchell ACT 2911

Dear Mr O'Brien

I write as Chair of the Select Committee on Estimates 2009–2010 regarding a letter from the Chief Minister, Mr Jon Stanhope MLA, about the OwnPlace affordable housing scheme.

It is the Committee's view that the letter you received inaccurately represented what occurred during the Estimates Committee hearing of 20 May 2009. As you received this inaccurate representation from the Chief Minister, the Committee believes the record must be officially corrected to reflect the true exchange that occurred.

At the hearing, Mr Alistair Coe MLA sought clarification in relation to information he had received from a constituent, about an apparent discrepancy in the price of houses being offered through the OwnPlace Scheme. At no stage did Mr Coe use the words 'price gouge' or make any accusations against any individual builder or builders. The statements in Mr Stanhope's letter that Mr Coe did so, are not correct.

It is the Committee's role to scrutinise the Executive in all matters of public spending to ensure that an open and accountable process is followed.

The Committee is concerned that the Chief Minister went beyond seeking further information for the Committee's consideration, but instead put to you inflammatory statements such as 'besmirch the reputation of builders' that is not an impartial representation of the enquiry.

The Committee apologises to you for any distress Mr Stanhope's inaccurate letter may have caused.

I have enclosed the Hansard transcript of the hearing of 20 May 2009 for your information. If you would like to discuss this issue further please do not hesitate to contact me on 6205 0323.

Yours sincerely

Zed Seselja
Chair
14 June 2009