

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE TAKEN
AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2002**

SESSION 2

Members

**Hon Barry House (Chairman
Hon Ed Dermer (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Murray Criddle
Hon John Fischer
Hon Dee Margetts
Hon Ken Travers
Hon Sue Ellery**

[1.20 pm]

MACRI, MS LINDA
Australian Citizen/Property Owner,
examined:

The CHAIRMAN: Welcome to the committee. Have you read, understood and signed the document entitled information for witnesses?

Ms Macri: Yes, I have.

The CHAIRMAN: These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and a transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. To assist the committee and Hansard please quote the full title of any document you refer to during the course of the hearing. Also, please be aware of the microphones.

I remind you that your transcript will become a matter for the public record. If, for some reason, you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in a closed session. If the committee grants your request, any public and media in attendance will be excluded from the hearing. Please note that until such time that the transcript of your public evidence is finalised, it should not be made public. I advise you that premature publication or disclosure of public evidence may constitute a contempt of Parliament and may mean that the material published or disclosed is not subject to parliamentary privilege. Ms Macri, would you like to make an opening statement?

Ms Macri: No, everything I want to say is in one statement. Thank you for your time. I am here to present to the standing committee why I strongly disagree with the way the Western Australian Government is approaching private landowners to buy back land for Bushplan and wetland areas. The tactics that are being used are demoralising and breed contempt. Further, they dishonour the Government which promised much and has done nothing but treat us in the most unjustified manner.

Why is the middle-class working man always targeted to sacrifice for the sake of everyone else in the community? Is it because wealthy people can afford to employ lawyers to oppose what they consider to be an injustice? The third-class citizen who does not work by choice and lives in government housing does not have anything to take. What is the Government promoting to the next generation - work hard and strive to secure a little for the future? When you have worked hard and paid taxes and rates for the past 20 years and begin to feel secure, the Government will come and pull the carpet out from under your feet.

Maybe we are stupid to want to achieve a little of the Aussie dream and to have pride and respect, and the knowledge that our children and grandchildren will be secure and stay united as a family. Is the Government so intent on destroying the very foundation upon which this country was developed; that is, hard work and united families? Would you all - particularly the Greenies - freely donate 10 per cent of your property value? Then, with what is left of your property, a government body imposes a conservation title on your property that deflates the market value to such a great extent that the only choice we have left is to live on government land or sell to the Government when, if ever, it has the money to pay us. How can you not understand

the contempt we feel towards the way we are being manipulated? The Government is impeaching on our rights as Australian citizens and property owners. If our land is required for future Bushplan or conservation, why is the Government selling off or developing land that it has acquired from previous private landowners using the same methods under different schemes? Is it for the Government land bank so that it can reap the benefits when it develops in the future? The Government resorts to scheming when there is a financial benefit of some kind in its favour.

I implore committee members to be aware of the information with which they are presented, as many hard-working families' livelihoods and futures are at stake. To the people who support conservation, if you have families do not do unto others what you would not like done to yourself and do not take from another man something you are not prepared to give yourself.

As Australian citizens, do we have no rights about a lifestyle that we have chosen and paid for, and one we are still paying for? We speculated that buying land would provide a more secure future. Are you now showing us that there is no security for a financially secure future? If we are to provide something the whole community wants to enjoy, why not impose a levy on land sales to compensate for our loss, because it is grossly unfair for one to gain all the benefit and for another to lose everything he or she has ever worked for.

Given that these are not my notes, can I give the next piece of information off the record?

The CHAIRMAN: Do you mean the last paragraph of your statement?

Ms Macri: Yes, the last bit of information I only have through word of mouth; it is not something I have checked myself. The information refers to the Valuer General's office. It is information I have not seen first-hand, so it is only on hearsay. However, I know the man concerned is very thorough.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: I seek clarification on this matter. Ms Macri, does this mean that you did not attend the meetings?

The CHAIRMAN: We are getting into a discussion of the evidence.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: I want to clarify if Ms Macri is talking about herself.

Ms Macri: I want to refer to the Valuer General's Office and the price per hectare.

[The Committee took evidence in private.]

[1.55 pm]

The CHAIRMAN: Do you want to clarify anything else on the map?

Ms Macri: No, the black and white map is of July 1993, which was the map that showed the proposed urban deferred area. It was supplied to me by a lady named Maureen at the Gosnells City Council. A large map is available in colour.

The CHAIRMAN: Will you provide that to the committee? We will be able to work that out in more detail. At this stage it is a bit difficult.

Hon ED DERMER: We have a black and white map here. Who advised you to expect the rezoning to change to urban deferred?

Ms Macri: It came in a brochure from the Gosnells City Council.

Hon ED DERMER: Did it advise that those areas were proposed to be urban deferred?

Ms Macri: Yes.

Hon ED DERMER: When did that come out?

Ms Macri: In July 1993. The black and white map you have there was supplied from the Gosnells City Council. It has a large colour map, which shows that our property was proposed to be urban deferred in 1993.

Hon ED DERMER: Do you have a copy of the brochure?

Ms Macri: No, I do not.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: In your written submission today you referred to land resumed from previous private landowners using the same methods under different schemes and the government land bank reaping benefits in the future. Can you give more detail on that?

Ms Macri: The Heathcote one.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: I mean within your area.

Ms Macri: No, not in my area. I was referring to Western Australia on a large scale. You need only read the papers every day to see them. I live in the backwoods and I hear of things.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: I thought you might have been referring to somewhere that had been reserved for bush or wetlands and sold for private use.

Ms Macri: If I looked into it I would find personal cases.

Hon JOHN FISCHER: When you bought in that area in 1987 what was the average size of properties?

Ms Macri: They were 15 to 20 acres and a few lots of eight acres.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: I understand the issue. It seems as though Ms Macri has bought the property at a certain price. Prices go up and she has been caught in Bushplan and that has upset the process.

Ms Macri: My husband and his brothers work as a family. None of us has superannuation - that land is our superannuation. If that is taken away, what in God's name have they been working for? I have tried my hardest to bring up good, moral children. What does this promote to them - that they should go on the dole and bludge because there is no reason to work?

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: What communication has occurred throughout the process over the past three or four years? Have you had communication with the agencies?

Ms Macri: With government departments?

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: Yes.

Ms Macri: It was non-existent. The other day when I saw Alannah MacTiernan, I told her that to this day not one government body or official had stepped foot on our property or contacted us. We have received only the Bushplan booklets and leaflets that came to our property. We have approached Judy Edwards on many occasions. Her time was free before the election, but since the election we have not been able to get in touch with her. Paul Andrews' influence is very limited. We had been trying constantly to make contact with Alannah MacTiernan. I was lucky the other day because she happened to sit next to me at the meeting. It was a prayer answered.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: Have you had any communication with the agency at all?

Ms Macri: Bushplan?

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: With the planning commission.

Ms Macri: Nothing whatsoever. We were signed up with a developer for three years but that has expired. He tried everything he could to slip our case through the loophole in the way other developers have done with other situations, but they were much bigger developers. He could not help us.

Hon ED DERMER: You explained before that Bushplan has a restrictive buffer.

Ms Macri: It has a 50 metre buffer.

Hon ED DERMER: Are you prevented from building within that buffer on your land.

Ms Macri: It prevents us from doing anything.

The CHAIRMAN: On 80 per cent of the land?

Ms Macri: The shire requires 80 per cent of the land. Once a 50 metre buffer is added to that, what is left? Two per cent remains - enough to run dogs and a few birds.

Hon ED DERMER: As I understand the rule, you cannot build on any part of that 80 per cent of the land or on the 50 per cent buffer?

Ms Macri: No, because while Bushplan impositions are in place the City of Gosnells will not let us subdivide.

Hon ED DERMER: So it is a decision of the City of Gosnells while Bushplan -

Ms Macri: That is implicated because Bushplan is in place.

Hon ED DERMER: How were you advised that your property was subject to the Bushplan impositions? Did you get a letter?

Ms Macri: We received a booklet first. I cannot remember whether it was in 1998 or 1999. It was about 12 months after the bushfire.

Hon ED DERMER: Did the booklet arrive in the post?

Ms Macri: Yes .

Hon ED DERMER: Did a letter accompany it?

Ms Macri: Yes, I think so.

Hon ED DERMER: Did that letter tell you that your land was subject to this Bushplan imposition?

Ms Macri: Yes. Even though I had made contact with Judy Edwards and other people, I found out only about four months ago that our land was not in the Bushplan; it is categorised as wetlands, although it has the same effect.

Hon ED DERMER: Were you told that or did you find out by asking?

Ms Macri: No. I think the City of Gosnells found out from Alannah MacTiernan's office that our land was categorised as wetlands, which has more or less the same implications as Bushplan.

Hon ED DERMER: Did the City of Gosnells tell you that was the case?

Ms Macri: Yes.

Hon ED DERMER: Did it ask on your behalf?

Ms Macri: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: We have canvassed the issue and we have a pretty good understanding of the situation you have found yourself in, but we have run out of time.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I understand that the land is zoned rural at the moment.

Ms Macri: Yes.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I understood the majority of that land was rezoned at least urban deferred in the mid 1990s. Why was your land not rezoned at the time?

Ms Macri: A map is available. The two coloured maps have large rings drawn on them, which depict a buffer zone from chook farms. The main one was a turkey farm, which required a 500-metre buffer zone. The City of Gosnells relayed to us that when the turkey farms and the chook farms were closed, we would be urban deferred.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The urban deferred would be part of the metropolitan region scheme so it could still have been rezoned to urban deferred and kept as part of a buffer zone.

Ms Macri: I think the City of Gosnells panicked because it had a lot of trouble with one chook farm in Huntingdale, and we got the back end of it. In other words, in hindsight, the city did not want to fall into the same trap of building housing around the chook farms as they did in that instance .

Hon ED DERMER: So that caused the City of Gosnells to be extra cautious.

Ms Macri: Yes. The unfortunate consequence of that was that we missed out all round.

The CHAIRMAN: Is there anything you want to say in conclusion?

Ms Macri: Are landowners able to find out who carried out the surveys of the wetlands and Bushplan in the area and the qualifications of the people involved? To this day we have seen no information whatsoever. If government has the information, why is the private landowner not able to have the same information?

The CHAIRMAN: Avenues are available by which you can get that information: through your own inquiries or through freedom of information?

Ms Macri: We have tried.

The CHAIRMAN: You can inquire through your local member of Parliament or any other member of Parliament to find out the information you want.

Ms Macri: Thank you very much.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: This committee can look into that. That information has been around for a while; it is not recent.

Ms Macri: Two of us have been very dedicated, but we have run into many dead ends.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It does not mean we will get it but we can ask why that information was kept as an in-house document.

Ms Macri: I ask because in all fairness, we should be able to see that the information is not biased for the benefit of the Government or the landowners. It should be fair to both sides. Thank you for your time.

The CHAIRMAN: Quite right. Thank you very much. If there is any information you want to leave with the committee please do so.