

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 87/2006
25 July 2006

The Opposition reject the personal attack by the Government on our housing spokesman Charles Bruzon. All that Mr Bruzon has done is draw attention to the plight of an elderly couple and seek to help them out in this way after the couple had themselves taken the decision to make their case public.

The Opposition considers that what is truly sickening is that the GSD Government should continue to resort to gutter politics whenever they have been caught out, and to meet reasoned arguments with a barrage of insults and accusations.

The central issue in the case of Mr and Mrs Duarte is that they had been waiting to be re-housed for four years. This point is completely omitted from the Government statement. They have proceeded to provide a summary of the history of the case in their press release as if everything, from the original representations to the final resolution, had happened recently.

This is misleading, since it was precisely the fact that they had been waiting for so long that prompted Mr and Mrs Duarte to air their grievances in public, and which led the Opposition to question what was going on.

The policy that the Minister for Housing is defending, as exemplified by this case, is that we have a person separated from his wife, and the department will not transfer the flat to her name because there are arrears pending. They then argue that because the flat is still in his name, because of their refusal, they cannot recognise that he is living with his parents and will move with them when they are re-housed. However, if the arrears are paid the problems are solved and the re-housing takes place. It is obvious that the delays encountered have been driven primarily by the Minister's desire to exploit the family's housing need to extract prompt payment of the arrears.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Minister for Housing Charles Bruzon said:

"It makes me very sorry that the GSD Government have reacted in such a hysterical manner to the well-meaning comments that I made. I have no doubt that any independent-minded person who has read what they said will also come to the conclusion that it is over the top.

It is unacceptable and wrong for the Government to impute base motives to me in this manner. The Government must understand that as Opposition Housing spokesman, helping the sick and the elderly is what I am paid to do. Anyone who knows me will know that I do this from the bottom of my heart."

Mr Bruzon added:

"It is clear to me and to many people that the GSD have nothing constructive to say and nothing positive to offer beyond insults and personal attacks. They have accused me of being "holier than thou" and have attacked the previous

administration. All I can say to them is let whoever is without sin cast the first stone.”

ENDS