



Speech by

MIKE REYNOLDS

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee G

Report

Mr REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (4.39 p.m.): I rise in support of the Estimates Committee G report and congratulate the chairman of that Estimates committee, the member for Lytton, on the excellent work that he and the committee did in scrutinising the budget requirements for the departments that come under the scrutiny of Estimates Committee G. One particular aspect of the report in regard to planning within the Department of Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning is of particular interest to me. The report states—

"The goal of the Planning program is to ensure sustainable development through integrated planning, that balances social, economic and environmental considerations."

I will take this opportunity to commend the committee, the department and the Minister on the work that is being envisaged to be done in the forthcoming budget year.

I would also take this opportunity to talk about the launch of the Townsville/Thuringowa strategic plan, which I launched on behalf of the Minister in Townsville a couple of weeks ago. Members would be aware that I am a strong supporter of regional planning in Queensland, particularly in the area of Townsville and Thuringowa. I am very pleased with the way regional planning has been embraced, not only by Governments but also by regional stakeholders and the community. There is a growing recognition that cooperative regional planning is the most sensible way to deal with growth management, resource allocation and environmental conservation issues. I am very proud to be able to say that there are now eight regional planning exercises in Queensland coming under the control of the Minister. Most of those have been at the request of local government with the support of their communities.

I stress the enormous potential of the Townsville/Thuringowa region. The twin cities of Townsville and Thuringowa have an established role as the largest urban centre outside of south-east Queensland. They comprise a major transport and export gateway and industrial and service centre for north Queensland, the Pacific rim and beyond. Even in the difficult economic times occasioned by Asia's problems, there is good reason to be confident when one considers the assets, the quality of life and the economic potential of that area. I know that regional planning will play a substantial role in guiding decision making to realise desirable future outcomes for the Townsville/Thuringowa region. It will also be a vehicle to promote confidence in the future of the area and an understanding as to how Townsville/Thuringowa will grow and develop. That has been sustained through proper and consistent regional planning for the area.

Once complete, The Townsville/Thuringowa strategy plan document should provide a framework within which the complex interactions between the economic, social and environmental elements of the region can be recognised and managed. Over the next two decades, the population of Townsville/Thuringowa is likely to grow by some 46,000 people. At the same time, the region can expect to expand and diversify its economic base and its role as the primary industrial and service centre in north Queensland. As we know, growth and development places increased demands on infrastructure and services, the natural environment and the region's human capital. It is critical,

therefore, that future development occurs in a sustainable fashion commensurate with the region's environmental values, lifestyle opportunities and the aspirations of its people. The planning process ensures that the consultation process and the process of working with the stakeholders include those inherent values.

It is important that continued prosperity needs to be assured through economic growth and investor confidence. Infrastructure to support future economic and community development needs to be planned ahead of time so that it can be provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner. At the same time, the attractiveness and liveability of the region must be maintained. Above all, Townsville/Thuringowa must be proactive if it is to shape its own future. The cooperative, consultative type of regional planning we have adopted in Queensland has had a few detractors in some planning circles. They say that it is not strong enough or that it is too bureaucratic. It is interesting to note the level of interest and support from other States as to how Queensland is planning its regions. It is an open process that encourages participation and increases the likelihood of obtaining the best balance between economic, social and environmental objectives. I applaud the planning process that has been examined through the Estimates committee. The Townsville and Thuringowa region can only be better for it.

Time expired.
