



Speech by

HOWARD HOBBS

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Hansard 25 March 1999

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (4.07 p.m.): The Integrated Planning Act was enacted in 1997 by the former Minister for Local Government and Planning, Mrs Di McCauley. She advised the House that there would be a number of consequential amendments to the original Act, and we have some of those here today. I am pleased that the Government is adhering to the timetable set for consequential amendments, and I thank the Minister for his attention to this matter.

I note that the Minister mentioned in his second-reading speech that the essential components of the Integrated Planning Act are the same as those proposed by the former Goss Government in what was known as the Planning, Environment and Development Assessment Bill, better known as the PEDAs Bill. I note that the Minister is keen to point out the similarities of the IPA and PEDAs. Although many of the initial building blocks are the same, it would be remiss of me not to point out the essential difference between the two, that is, that the IPA was passed as legislation by the Parliament under the coalition Government, and the controversies that surrounded the PEDAs Bill are now long forgotten and filed away.

Mr Mackenroth: That's because you made them controversies.

Mr HOBBS: That is not right. The member did not get it right. I must say that it was not a bad effort, but he did not get it right.

This legislation seeks to meet three objectives, the first being to implement the integrated development assessment system, IDAS, created under the Integrated Planning Act 1997 for the development related approval mechanism in section 40 of the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994. Secondly, it seeks to remove redundant development assessment processes from the Stock Act 1915 to clarify aspects of the intended operation of the IPA and correct minor errors in the text.

The amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act seek to remove the processes whereby local governments obtain approvals of the Department of Main Roads before approving certain subdivisions, rezonings or development of land. In summary, the intent of the amendment is to enable similar powers under the IPA. I note that in the Minister's second-reading speech the amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act have been drafted in the light of feedback received from key external stakeholders. The Explanatory Notes state that internal stakeholders consulted have indicated their agreement with the proposed amendments. I hope that all departments are supportive of these amendments, as it would be a most unfortunate situation for local governments across-the-board in Queensland if this was not the case. I hope the Minister will comment on exactly which internal stakeholders were consulted. I note that the regulations supporting this amendment are still to be resolved. I asked the Minister to detail any progression in relation to those regulations. Just as it is important to have correct legislation, it is equally important to have correct regulations that implement the intent of the legislation.

It is no wonder that amendments were required to the Stock Act. In summary, since 1989 this is what a licensed cattle feedlot operator has had to contend with: in 1989 a licence was required under the Stock Act; in 1996 licence holders had to be re-licensed under the EPA; in 1998 the licensing provisions of the EPA were integrated with the IDAS; and in 1999 the Stock Act was amended by repealing provisions concerning the licensing of feedlots.

I have no doubt that representatives of the larger cattle feedlots are aware of the progression of the EPA and the Stock Act and have acted accordingly. Unfortunately, when cattle feedlots are mentioned the image is of large feedlots such as Bottle Tree near Chinchilla or Wyalla near Texas that cater for thousands of cattle. However, this is not a true picture of the industry. It must not be forgotten that these are not the only feedlots in Queensland. Many farmers have licences for small cattle feedlots for maybe 10 to 100 head of cattle. The fact that these licences exist adds value to the farming enterprise and allows farming diversity—something which farmers are encouraged to pursue in the current climate of depressed commodity prices.

I ask the Minister to clarify the following aspects of the Explanatory Notes and his second-reading speech. The Explanatory Notes General Outline states that the objectives of the Bill are to remove a redundant development assessment process from the Stock Act 1915. Part 3 of the Explanatory Notes refers to the amendment of the Stock Act 1915 and also refers to the omission of sections 28A to 281. Clause 17 omits sections about the licensing of cattle feedlots. These provisions were made redundant by the environmental regime in the EPA. That Act has required the re-licensing of cattle feedlot operators since July 1996.

I note that the Minister in his second-reading speech stated that the licences that will remain in place under the Stock Act will be automatically terminated upon the repeal of those provisions. If the development assessment process is redundant—which means that it is a surplus or duplicate process—why has the Minister stated that licences will be automatically terminated? Should not any existing licences be dealt with by the EPA Act and the process under that Act and not automatically terminated? What is the Government doing with these licences that are still rightfully owned by Queenslanders?

I would appreciate the Minister dealing in his summing-up with how many licences are expected to be automatically terminated upon the repeal and what consultation his department, the Department of Primary Industries and the FeedLot Advisory Committee have had with the licence holders affected. I believe it would be irresponsible of the Government not to inform any licence holder affected. It is not appropriate that a licence holder should wake up to find out after the event that he or she no longer has a licence. I would appreciate it if the Minister would clarify these issues in his reply.

I want to refer to the IPA. The modification of a number of sections of the IPA seeks to clarify the operation of those sections and improve the efficiency of IDAS. As the Minister has already stated, these amendments are proposed to address the operating difficulties in an effort to avoid the development of major problems in the future. I am pleased that local government can have confidence that even minor difficulties will be addressed in a timely manner. Although some of these amendments are retrospective, it would appear to be the most sensible solution which will provide certainty and leave no doubt that the permits are lawful. I look forward to the Minister's comments in relation to the issues that I have raised. I had limited time to go through the proposed amendments. However, from what I can see, it appears as if they are appropriate. I suppose time will tell. I support the Bill before the House.
