



Speech by

**CHRIS CUMMINS**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Hansard 17 September 2002

### **INTEGRATED PLANNING AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (4.26 p.m.): I rise to participate in the debate on the Integrated Planning Amendment Bill 2002. The state has a broad range of statutory and jurisdictional obligations with respect to promoting sustainable communities, including providing a range of supporting infrastructure and services and in facilitating economic development. The Integrated Planning Act 1997—or the IPA as it has become universally known—clearly provides for the protection and integration of state interests in land use planning schemes and decision making on development proposals.

As the only councillor who was successful in being elected to this place at the last state election, obviously I keep an eye on and have a major interest in and contact with local governments. Both the Minister for Local Government and Planning and the Minister for State Development have a reserve power under the IPA to call in and decide a development application if the development involves a state interest as defined by the IPA. I believe we should ask: why was this power put in the act if it was never to be used in the best interest of the state? These ministerial call-in powers under the IPA are intended specifically to allow the government to intervene in the development assessment process where state interests are involved and to be the final arbiter on state-interest matters. This final decision-making responsibility is clearly provided for in the act, since the effect of an application being called in for determination by the state is that any existing appeals are of no further effect. I believe that Queenslanders feel content knowing that local governments have a watchdog to ensure all Queenslanders' best interests when they oversee local councils. There are good councils, but it is no secret that there are also some that are struggling. The state government has community support to continue to act for all Queenslanders.

Recently, I met with Caloundra Mayor Don Aldous. I know that Caloundra city ratepayers are grateful for the over \$4.5 million that was supplied in 2001-02 by the Beattie Labor government.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr CUMMINS:** I take the member's interjection. The Kings Beach redevelopment is absolutely superb. I fully supported that development when I was a member of the Caloundra City Council.

Maroochy Shire Council residents are also very appreciative of grants of close to \$3 million for the year 2001-02. This inept opposition has failed to mention during the debate how local councils have been duped by the federal coalition's offer of financial help after the HIH collapse.

Local councils in Queensland are telling me that they are unlikely to qualify for the help promised by Prime Minister John Howard after the HIH Insurance collapse. This is a very big issue on the Sunshine Coast, because if councils lose some major insurance claims against them the impact will flow on to residents and ratepayers because we have been duped by the federal government. It appears that the offer made by the federal coalition government in June last year has turned out to be worthless. Local councils have been duped and they are not very happy. This could have up to a \$3.5 million impact on Queensland ratepayers. That is the amount of money by which councils are out of pocket and which they will have to find through rates.

Queensland Treasury's initial assessment is that under the Commonwealth government guidelines no Queensland local government would receive any benefit from the package because of a requirement that the local government must bear that part of any financial loss which is equal to or less than 10 per cent of council's total average revenue. The offer is significantly below the Local Government Association's expectation. I am concerned that the Commonwealth's hardship criteria are set so high that few if any Queensland local governments would qualify for assistance under the Commonwealth package. So why does this opposition not stand up for Queensland ratepayers instead of being the federal Liberal's lap-dogs? I commend the bill to the House.