



Speech by

Mark McArdle

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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SEQ REGIONAL PLAN

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (12.16 p.m.): I rise today to express my party's support for the draft urban development plan released nearly two weeks ago. But, then again, why would we not support such a move when one notes that it was my party that showed the vision and guidance on this issue in the first place? In May 2003 Bob Quinn released the Liberal Party's policy on urban development, which compromised three key elements. The first was to establish an Office of Urban Development. The government then established the Office of Urban Management—a single word change to try to disguise Labor's plagiarism. We argued that this office should be established within Treasury rather than being a stand-alone department, with the rationale for this policy principle being that we believed that this critical issue needed to be driven by the person who controlled the purse strings and could allocate the financial resources needed to implement the overall policy. Surprise, surprise! The government placed the department within the office of the Treasurer.

Secondly, the Liberal Party proposed the development and implementation of an urban development plan for south-east Queensland. We stated that this plan should clearly mark areas of conservation, areas for future development, areas where changes in urban density would be suitable, areas for catchment management and future transport corridors. The draft document released by the government just under two weeks ago covers all of these. The third key component of my party's policy was the need for a comprehensive and coordinated infrastructure plan to integrate and underpin the urban development plan. We believed that, without the identification and coordinated delivery of the required infrastructure to support the future growth, any future plan for urban development was destined to fail like all of the plans before it. Simply put, it would become just a symbolic gesture. The government has also announced that it intends to release an infrastructure plan in April 2005. Overall, we are happy to see the Beattie government implementing our policies. After all, imitation is the finest form of flattery.

However, what concerns us is the Beattie government's appalling track record in planning and delivering infrastructure. We believe that the effectiveness of the draft urban development plan will be destroyed if this government does not deliver the required infrastructure such as the roads, hospitals, electricity, water, schools and public transport that is needed to fully support the plan.

Queensland is a growth state. In the past 10 years, over 500,000 people have migrated here with a further one million due over the next 20 years. This rapid population growth will place huge strains on our already stressed infrastructure. The report card released yesterday by the Queensland division of Engineers Australia showed quite clearly that the Beattie government is in desperate need of remedial education when it comes to infrastructure. This report card gave Queensland a D minus for electricity and a C for state controlled roads. The Queensland division of Engineers Australia found that, in relation to our electricity network, a D-plus network—

The overall performance of the Queensland electricity supply infrastructure is determined by the performance of the weakest sector of its supply chain. From an overall system perspective, it matters little if electricity is being generated if there are difficulties with delivery. The weakest link in Queensland is the distribution sector.

This is a true sign of the lack of vision and commitment needed to provide a world-class infrastructure system.

In a twist, the report card gave the federal government a C plus for national roads—a higher grade than that achieved by the Beattie government, which repeatedly launches juvenile attacks on the state of our national roads. Something could be said about people in glass houses, but I will leave that for another time.

As I have stated, the Beattie government has an appalling track record in planning and delivering infrastructure. While my party welcomes the draft plan for south-east Queensland, if the Beattie government does not deliver the required infrastructure the success of the plan is in complete jeopardy. The Beattie government has released its plan for future land use and development. The government has promised to develop and release an infrastructure plan. We hope that the government honours this delivery as soon as possible. Quite simply, the urban development plan will not work unless the commitment to deliver the required infrastructure is properly planned and funded.