



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Tuesday, 6 March 2007

MOOLOOLABA SPIT

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.47 am): The future of Mooloolaba is under threat from government and council plans to double the footprint of prime commercial property in this beautiful resort town by building up to 12-storey high-rises on crown land on Mooloolaba Spit. This move could destroy the future of this town as the area is already under tremendous strain, with traffic at near gridlock most weekends, not just during peak holiday season. The main beneficiary, though, will be the state government, which would stand to make a windfall from selling the redevelopment rights. That must be tempting given the fact that prime land in Mooloolaba is selling for values equivalent to land in Bondi in Sydney.

Announced by the Premier in parliament the other week, the master plan and specifically its proposal to radically increase the density upon the wharf site with no accompanying traffic study to justify this decision and no support from the community has been met with widespread alarm. It was developed under the Mooloolaba Spit Futures Study, a joint project between the state government and the Maroochy Shire Council and to which a large number of community members and stakeholders contributed. They contributed in good faith but they currently feel betrayed.

Since the release of the plan, the feedback has been amazing. People are angry that what they put forward in their contributions has been totally ignored. I agreed with the Premier's statement when he said in this House, 'Without a more effective management approach to the spit, the pressures on this area are not sustainable'. That is correct. But this plan is one of the worst that could possibly be devised. It is disastrous for the future of this area and it is unsustainable.

For this to be proposed upon crown land in a confined area with no traffic studies is appalling. This plan would result in a nightmare vision for Mooloolaba, an extreme makeover that would be far from pretty but that would be akin to putting a scalpel in the hands of a dodgy surgeon for the sake of a quick buck.

However, until the Premier has met with a deputation of concerned citizens, I would like to give him the benefit of the doubt. I suggest that he is not aware of how just how disastrous this plan is, as he may not have been advised of how it flies in the face of community consultation and what it actually means. Given that he is a frequent holiday-maker at Mooloolaba, we are appealing to him to listen to the people and protect the public interest.

I request the Premier to meet with me and a deputation of concerned citizens representing the community, which would include road engineers and people from the community reference group. They want to see common-sense planning that protects Mooloolaba's future and that takes into account the road network leading to the spit, and a more balanced approach to the need to revitalise the wharf complex. We agree that this area needs revitalising, but it must be done in the right way and not by selling off the birthright of future generations.

Let us look at the facts. The footprint of the redeveloped wharf and surrounding crown land car parks next to Underwater World would be equivalent to the whole of the esplanade commercial strip in Mooloolaba. I am advised by a government briefing that the site would carry an additional 500 public car

parks over and above those required by the redeveloped site, making this the major car parking facility in Mooloolaba and channelling thousands of extra cars into a very restricted part of town.

When I asked about the traffic studies that have been undertaken, I was told that a study was underway. I believe that I was told that council was undertaking the studies, but this alone rings loud warning bells because nothing has accompanied the plan that has been released. Members of the community reference groups were also told that a traffic analysis was underway.

On Monday 15 August at the CRG meeting, a handout titled 'Summary Of Technical Investigations to Date, Discussion Paper, August 2005' was circulated. The handout stated that—

Recent transport modelling for the Mooloolaba area indicates that the intersections accessing the Spit are able to be upgraded to accommodate additional traffic volumes and/or improve current traffic management.

Some of these upgrades would involve the widening of Brisbane Road and the signalization of the Brisbane Road/Hancock Street intersection—

Which is already signalised—

and the Hancock Street/River Esplanade/Underwater World access.

The consultants were supposed to undertake a traffic study that pulled together all previous studies.

However, when we go back to look at the so-called recent transport modelling studies, they are not in fact at all recent. They say that traffic modelling indicates that even with the widening of Walan Street and improvements to the intersection of Walan Street, Hancock Lane and Brisbane Road, the capacity of the road system will be exceeded by 2011. This means that delays will be more frequent and occur for longer periods of time.

In other words, no road network modelling has been carried out based upon this new plan with significant desertification of crown land at Mooloolaba Spit. We are calling on the Premier to reject this plan and meet the people, and let us get the planning right.

Time expired.