



Speech by

Hon. Paul Lucas

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Hansard Wednesday, 31 October 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Iconic Queensland Communities Bill

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.49 am): Every 5½ minutes we welcome a new Queenslanders. That is about 1,800 new Queenslanders every single week. They are not only coming here because of our outstanding economic performance or our low unemployment rate; they are also coming because of our wonderful climate and because they can live within easy reach of some of the country's most beautiful natural features and iconic areas. Through initiatives such as the South East Queensland Regional Plan and the Far North Queensland Regional Plan, the government is already working to direct and manage that growth. The planned Iconic Queensland Communities Bill 2007 is another initiative this government is taking to help make sure that Queensland continues to grow sustainably.

The Iconic Queensland Communities Bill will apply to iconic areas located in areas that are to be subsumed by new regional councils. It will be designed to ensure that existing planning schemes which have protected these areas from overdevelopment in the past are maintained to protect these areas well into the future. This legislation will not be about making the rules more complex; it is about making sure that we protect some of Queensland's most significant iconic areas. Wherever possible the legislation will be consistent with the state's existing planning and development assessment system under the Integrated Planning Act. The state government will nominate two regions from the outset—Noosa and Port Douglas—as having iconic status. However, other areas to be subsumed in newly amalgamated councils are also eligible for nomination. This legislation will not be a barrier to appropriate development. However, it will make sure that areas with iconic status continue to have strong local planning regimes in place.

There has been a good deal of interest in the proposed legislation, including from a number of local governments, some of which I have met with. I want to make sure we get this legislation right and I will be undertaking consultation with key stakeholders over the coming months to ensure all views are heard. The new laws to protect our built and natural icons will be in place ahead of council amalgamations in March. But before then I will be travelling to key areas of the state seeking feedback. I want to consult as widely as possible to get the right outcome for the people of Queensland. This legislation will ensure our iconic treasures are protected for the enjoyment of Queenslanders today and well into the future. It is about preserving what makes this state the envy of every other in Australia.