



Speech by

# Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Wednesday, 7 March 2007

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## MOTION: SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND REGIONAL PLAN

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (12.12 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to participate in the debate on the amendment to the regulatory provisions of the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005-2026. I note that the next formal review of the regional plan will be undertaken in 2010. I intend to come back to that later during my short submission.

It is great to see that on page 8 there is clear identification of the important role that Nambour will play in the growth of the Sunshine Coast. I note on map 8 on page 27 of the regional plan that Nambour is identified as a major regional activity centre. It is very important that Nambour is identified as a major regional activity centre. As we speak, the Maroochy Shire Council has submitted an application to the minister for local government for some funding assistance so that we can better plan for the future role that Nambour will play in the Sunshine Coast region. The application for funding was made under the Regional Centres Program. So I am asking the minister to join me in lobbying the minister for local government to see whether we can have a win with this application.

I understand that \$2 million of state government funding has been applied for. The local council has been prepared to allocate \$2 million of ratepayer funds so that in a genuine partnership we can redevelop the town of Nambour to make sure that at this very crucial time we get the right infrastructure in place that will carry Nambour through to the future. It is great to see that the government has recognised the future role of Nambour but, more importantly, we now need to see the state government put some money on the table to match the council. I understand that the council has applied for \$2 million of state government funding but it will be prepared to put in significant dollars up-front as well.

That leads me to maps 13, 15 and 17 on pages 34, 36 and 37 respectively. These various maps identify the important role that Nambour will play in relation to the National Highway and the upgrading of the National Highway but, more importantly, the upgrading of the national rail link. It is very timely that I am speaking about this matter at 12.15 pm today because a few hours ago a number of vehicles got punctured tyres as they drove down this National Highway. Do members know why? They got punctured tyres because the pavement failed. As we speak, Main Roads officers have had to go out and close off part of a lane on this National Highway. It is a disgrace that in Queensland, the growth centre of Australia, our federal government is not prepared to put money on the table and our state government is not prepared to make sure that these national highways can be travelled on safely. I hope there were no serious accidents as a result of the failure of the pavement due to the recent rainfall.

I note that on these maps there is reference to the future upgrading of the road and also reference to the investigation of the upgrading of the railway corridor from Landsborough to Nambour. I take this opportunity to urge the government not just to move forward on the investigation of the upgrading of the railway corridor but to put some dollars on the table so that the duplication of the railway corridor can be continued from Landsborough to Nambour. On our main railway line that travels from Brisbane to Cairns and beyond, at the moment we have one track in the Sunshine Coast railway corridor. It is a very narrow corridor—one could almost touch both sides of the boundary. It is time that we moved forward on the investigation and then put dollars on the table so that we can duplicate this very important railway

infrastructure. I would hope that as soon as possible those potholes—the pavement failure of the National Highway near Nambour—can be rectified.

One other matter I wish to raise in this debate is the investigation of Bridges, which is a site on the Sunshine Coast, becoming an economic activity centre. As we speak, I understand that newsletters have been distributed—they are in the mail or may have arrived at the homes of hundreds and hundreds of people in the Sunshine Coast hinterland surrounding Bridges, Yandina, North Arm, Eumundi, Belli, Eerwah Vale and Mount Ninderry—informing them of the next round of meetings, which I understand are due to be held on 20 March at the Yandina RSL hall. I urge members of the community to come along and attend those meetings. It is imperative that they come along and express their views to let the state government, the department and consultants know full well what their views are about the investigation of the Bridges area as a future economic activity centre.

Notwithstanding the view of the Maroochy Shire Council—because I know it has its own proposals for what it wants to see happen at Bridges—I believe that this plan is in direct conflict with the 2025 consultation process that was recently undertaken in the Maroochy shire when thousands of residents took the time to say what their vision and their view was for the future of the Sunshine Coast and, more importantly, of the Maroochy shire.

I believe that this proposal is in direct conflict with what our current Maroochy shire residents want to see happen in their own backyard. The real issue of concern is the proposed magnitude of the development. If we see a future economic activity centre at Bridges, the next natural progression, in my mind, is changes that will happen around this proposed economic activity centre. I have always said that if this major development takes place in Bridges there will be an automatic request at a future time for the land use that surrounds this site to be significantly changed. What we will see is a major change in the very make-up of the hinterland of the Maroochy shire. Resident after resident tells me that they relocated from Cairns, Melbourne and Sydney to come to the Sunshine Coast because of its amenity—its lovely outlook and atmosphere. I believe that if this proposal goes ahead it will directly clash with the aspirations of the residents that I represent. Interestingly, only recently I heard one of my colleagues, the member for Maroochy, Fiona Simpson, talk about the need for population capping in part of her electorate. I believe this is an important issue that we need to be very much aware of.

Whilst talking about the issues of Bridges and the investigation of the area, when the investigation is complete and the information comes to hand—which I believe will say that there is need for a major allocation of money to upgrade the water, sewerage, and electrical systems and to build major intersections on the National Highway so that there can be safe and easy access to the proposed industrial estate should it happen—what criteria will the minister compare that with as against the other sites on the Sunshine Coast which we believe are more suitable? I believe there will be a significant cost factor for that infrastructure. It will cost a lot of money to provide the water and sewerage services needed, a whole new electricity system and to upgrade the roads. More importantly, how are we going to compare that with other land? I understand at the moment that the terms of reference do not allow the consultants or the staff of the Office of Urban Management to look outside the limited scope that they currently have.

The next review is to be undertaken in 2010. When this investigation of the Bridges site is completed and the consultants prepare a report, how will the minister be able to evaluate whether the site should be changed to another use if she has not had an opportunity to evaluate any other alternative sites which may be outside the footprint? I have no doubt that the consultants will say part of the land is suitable, part of the land is not suitable and some of it we do not know because of the cost of providing the infrastructure. I believe that the minister will be significantly restricted in her ability to make an accurate evaluation of the proposal if she is not able to consider information about other sites outside the current restricted area.

I would urge the minister to take those comments on board. I am aware of the Maroochy council's view about Bridges. I do not share that view at all. I know what my constituents are saying and they are certainly sending me a very clear message. They do not want to see a major economic activity centre happening in Bridges in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast, the hinterland of Maroochy shire and in my heartland. I will continue to fight any proposal that will result in a major change to the future of the Sunshine Coast. At the moment we have something very unique. There is only one Sunshine Coast; we need to protect and preserve it. I congratulate the government for trying to restrict development in some areas. I do believe we now must ensure that the Sunshine Coast is aligned, as best it can be, with the visions, desires and wishes of the people who live there.

If it is the case that the government wants to go down the road of building and providing land for more economic activity centres, can I suggest having smaller centres on the Sunshine Coast. What is wrong with that? That is what the residents say they want. That is what I believe is the message in the 2025 vision statement. Residents want to see smaller industrial estates from Noosa to Caloundra. They do not want to see major economic activity centres because that will significantly destroy the very Sunshine Coast that we all love and treasure and want to see protected. I commend my views and thoughts to the Speaker, the minister and the government. Hopefully the minister will support me to ensure that Maroochy council is successful in receiving financial support from the state government through the minister for local government for its application for the revitalisation of Nambour, which is identified as a major regional activity centre.