



Speech by

Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Wednesday, 31 October 2007

LAND VALUATION AND ACQUISITION

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (6.19 pm): I support the amendment moved by the Deputy Premier. There are several issues I want to speak about in this debate. As well as our overall system for property acquisition, I will refer to the difference planning can make to these issues. I want to address how this is an issue for Queenslanders in regional and urban areas.

First, let me note, as the Deputy Premier's amendment demonstrates, that the government is in fact a lot closer to the crossbenches on this position than I think some people are letting us believe. For instance, in terms of the way the department of infrastructure acquires land, the general approach is to cause property owners as little disruption as possible. Indeed, the community would expect no less. When an acquisition is needed, departmental officers consult with the landowners to explain the project and the acquisition outcomes. The department then obtains a valuation for the property from a suitably qualified and registered valuer and makes an offer to the landowner. Additional disturbance costs may be applicable to the purchase and an offer may be made for things like the owner's legal and valuation costs, removal costs and costs associated with purchasing an additional property.

Once an offer is made to the landowner, they may accept it and the transaction can be completed. In the event that they do not accept the offer, they can obtain their own valuation of the property and the opportunity is given to discuss both valuations that have been received, with a genuine attempt made by government officers to negotiate an amicable settlement. As members can see, everything the government does seeks to be as fair as possible. In the event that an amicable settlement cannot be reached at the time and there is an urgent time frame requirement for the land, the state can commence compulsory acquisition. But in all cases it is the government's preference to negotiate an amicable settlement with landowners, notwithstanding that the compulsory acquisition process may have been commenced. In the end, it has to be defensible and transparent, as the motion and amendment clarifies, because when it goes before the Land Court it needs to be defensible and transparent.

There are many planning mechanisms the government uses to reduce the number and impact of future property acquisitions. In some cases, infrastructure planning has a long-time horizon. In these circumstances, where it is known that a future piece of infrastructure is proposed to be built, it is common practice to notify this intention by means of a community infrastructure designation on the planning scheme of the relevant local government. This CID has a six-year life. If the government has not acted to acquire the land and build infrastructure within this time, the CID lapses or the minister has to redesignate for a further six years. Wherever possible, the government uses government land or public utility corridors and roads on which to construct linear infrastructure, such as water pipes for the south-east Queensland water grid. The government has in place a property management committee to consider, amongst other things, acquisitions of land for certain government activities and disposals of state land again for government projects.

Part of the Coordinator-General's function is to plan for the future economic development of the state. There is the power to declare areas of land to be state development areas, which enables the government to put in place a higher level of land use and infrastructure planning as well as the ability to

compulsorily acquire land within the state development area for the purpose of implementing the development scheme or infrastructure. The state government has instituted the South East Queensland Regional Plan and its partner SEQIPP to ensure that the community and businesses know about our plans for future development, including the provision of infrastructure. Identifying infrastructure corridors early means that people can make purchasing decisions fully informed years and years ahead.

Finally, I want to remind the House that this is not an issue confined to one electorate, or indeed to one area of the state, and this should not be a debate about urban versus regional Queenslanders.

Mrs Pratt: We are not.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I am pleased that the member for Nanango acknowledges this. Urban areas are consistently impacted by development and the provision of new infrastructure. That includes private sector development and of course development undertaken by or on behalf of local, state or federal governments.

The member for Nicklin suggested that we reflect on families gathering at their dinner table at this time of night worried about the future. I can assure him that there are families in my electorate with those worries over their heads, but the worries will not be washed away by this debate. I can assure the member for Nicklin that the Queensland system is designed to ensure fairness to all parties—those individuals being compensated and also, very importantly, the taxpayers of Queensland. They are also entitled to be treated fairly. The government takes these issues seriously. I support the amendment moved by the Deputy Premier.