



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

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TOWN PLANNING

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (11.45 am): On the weekend the coalition continued to exhibit how out of touch it is when senior Howard government minister Senator Nick Minchin told the Australian people that there is no skills shortage. That is indicative of the lack of foresight and planning of the Howard government. Thankfully, the Queensland government, our local industry leaders and professional associations are not so deluded. That is why last week it was my pleasure, on the eve of World Town Planning Day, to officially launch the *Planning is Awesome* DVD.

This initiative of the Planning Institute of Australia's Young Planners Group was strongly supported by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning, major local authorities and the local government career task force, which is chaired by Ms Lyn Russell. The DVD is aimed at promoting planning as a profession and highlights the vital contribution that planners make in the proper development of our communities across the whole of Queensland. As Australia's fastest growing state, we in Queensland must ensure that our planning and development is responsive to changing needs while still delivering high-quality outcomes.

The DVD showcases 12 young professionals in a variety of planning areas, including those working for the state government, for local government, in private practice, in property development and social planning and planning law. The DVD covers projects as diverse as the desalination plant at Tugun, which this morning in this House was mentioned by the Deputy Premier as being on time and on budget; rural land planning in the Maranoa, and I will be visiting that area in early December to meet with the local RPAC groups as they continue that strong and outstanding planning process, which is led by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure; through to planning projects that are run by the Ipswich City Council in the Ripley valley.

The *Planning is Awesome* DVD will be distributed across Queensland and around Australia through the Geography Teachers Association; career guidance counsellors, such as those former professional colleagues of the member for Gaven; the Local Government Association of Queensland; and the Planning Institute of Australia. The DVD is aimed squarely at secondary school students and will be a great resource for use at career expos and university open days. I wish to congratulate all of the young professionals who were involved in the making of the DVD and those who brought it together so well, especially Kate Wagner, who made it her personal mission to bring this project forward.

It is timely for the Department of Infrastructure and Planning to be involved in this excellent project. This new department provides a whole-of-government approach to major project developments and infrastructure policy, planning, coordination and delivery; it supports project proponents by facilitating services and giving timely advice on major projects and infrastructure; it promotes and attracts investment in major projects and infrastructure; and, most importantly, it coordinates regional and urban growth management.

Some of the planning challenges that many communities across Australia, and those particularly in Queensland, are facing include changes in demographics and household structures; increasing community expectations for good-quality, timely planning outcomes; decreasing housing affordability; the development of sustainable communities and buildings; the effects of climate change; increasing

development pressure on our unique and sensitive natural environments, including our coastline; issues associated with maintaining viable rural communities; and increasing development pressures in the resource-rich regions. A nationwide shortage of experienced industry professionals is creating extra pressures on the system. That is why projects such as this DVD are so important.

On this note it is important to recognise that Queensland's newly formed Department of Infrastructure and Planning has achieved top honours at this year's Planning Institute of Australia's Queensland Awards for Planning Excellence, taking out five industry awards. Those awards recognise the department's planning focus on the environment, water, climate change and regional Queensland. This recognition demonstrates the extraordinary work of our planners and the role they play in driving urban, regional and rural planning strategies across Queensland.

In this context it is vital to recognise the shortage of skilled planners and acknowledge it as one of our greatest challenges. Senator Minchin might not recognise a skills shortage, but the Queensland government has and it has policies to address it. That is why we look forward to a partnership with a Rudd Labor team that has a comprehensive plan to address skills shortages. The tired and out-of-touch Howard government ignores skills shortages across-the-board and yesterday its response to this issue consisted of a tax rebate for private school fees. Equally, it is important—

Time expired.