



Speech by

## Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Tuesday, 13 May 2008

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### SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND REGIONAL PLAN

**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (12.05 pm): I rise to highlight the importance of good planning and the forward-thinking efforts of the Bligh government in this vital field. As all members appreciate, Queensland is experiencing unprecedented population and economic growth. South-east Queensland alone grows by almost 66,000 people annually and, as we know, over 1,000 per week are choosing to move here.

However, Queensland has always prided itself on being a state where growth outside the capital is just as important as growth around Brisbane. More people are moving north—to places such as Mackay and Cairns—to enjoy the coastal lifestyle and job opportunities that those areas offer. I know my colleague the member for Mount Isa is very pleased that the resources boom is also driving growth in other parts of Queensland, such as the city of Mount Isa. Clearly, Queensland is growing and not just in the south-east corner.

Although growth is positive, catering for more people creates a unique set of challenges for governments. People need a place to live, a place to work and a place to play. That means additional infrastructure needs to be delivered. Planning is a top priority for the Bligh government because it realises that, if Queensland is to continue prospering, it must plan smartly and act on accommodating and supporting growth in a timely and sustainable manner.

To that end, last week the Bligh government announced that the review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan would be brought forward 12 months—a full 12 months—in response to the huge growth that the south-east has experienced. Since the release of the plan in 2005, south-east Queensland has experienced growth that has surpassed the initial projections, which would have seen 3.96 million people in the south-east corner by 2026. Revised figures now estimate that the figure by that time will be 4.3 million people in the south-east corner. For the purposes of this review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan, the horizon has also been extended from the year 2026 to the year 2031.

Issues of traffic congestion, housing affordability and climate change have become increasingly important to Queenslanders. The Bligh government realises that a contemporary response is required to meet these challenges. That is what this review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan will focus on. It will provide a great opportunity for every player in the community—for people living in our suburbs and in our small towns—to make a contribution, for industry to make a contribution and for the local government sector to contribute.

That is why I want to take this opportunity to strongly encourage the community to participate in the review process: to ensure that the plan responds positively to these important challenges—as I say, challenges such as traffic congestion, housing affordability and climate change. Those responses should be realistic yet far reaching. Similarly, the newly elected councils must bring forward their planning agendas as part of the review. This review is another example of the government tackling planning head-on to protect our lifestyle and to ensure that Queensland continues to be a great place to live.

Last week in Cairns the Bligh government also announced the release of the first draft regional plan for far-north Queensland. It is predicted that far-north Queensland will be home to 323,000 people by 2025. That is an extra 5,000 people and 2,000 homes per year. Three-quarters of those new residents will

call the Cairns area home. That means planning needs to begin now so that Cairns can cater for this growth in a considered manner and can circumvent development that is unconnected to transport and infrastructure. The FNQ 2025 blueprint will guide development in the far north of the state for the next two decades.

The Bligh government is looking beyond parliamentary terms to horizons set at least 15 years into the future. The people of Queensland need a government with vision. The Bligh government has plenty. Too many governments around the world have failed to appropriately plan for growth and are left playing perpetual catch-up because, let us face it, poor planning will doom us to an unsustainable future. The Bligh government is determined to ensure, and indeed is acting to protect, Queenslanders' enviable prosperity and lifestyle.