



Speech by

Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

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BUILDING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (3.45 pm): I rise to support the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In doing so, I commend the minister for delivering a series of firsts in Australia in leadership and sustainability. The bill places Queensland as a national leader in what are groundbreaking policies relating to sustainable buildings, koala habitat preservation and transport noise. We have a rapidly growing state, and the government is putting long-term, sensible strategies in place to preserve our quality of life.

The bill supports the introduction of two innovative new sustainability measures: firstly, the mandatory sustainability declaration at the point of sale for houses, town houses and units; and, secondly, the 'ban the banners' policy that stops bodies corporate and developers from restricting and banning the use of sustainable and affordable design features such as light coloured roofs, smaller houses and solar hot-water systems. These measures will contribute very strongly to the Bligh government's Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland green ambitions.

With growing concerns about the potential impacts of climate change and the need to improve the sustainability performance of our buildings, encouraging more Queenslanders to take notice of sustainable building features is becoming more important. Pioneering long-term strategies, such as the sustainability declaration, explicitly demonstrate the Bligh government's commitment to tackling the climate change challenge and protecting our future.

The disclosure of sustainability features of a home is on a national agenda in an effort to boost the performance of existing homes. However, Queensland is leading the nation by adopting a disclosure model before it becomes mandatory nationally in 2011. The introduction of the three areas in the national model—that is, energy, water and greenhouse gas emissions—is being staged over several years, with new areas being introduced over time in steps starting with energy. Queensland, I am very proud to say, is at the forefront of the nation by taking a broad view of sustainability and requiring disclosure in four key areas—energy, water, access and security—at once, with a simple method of ascertaining the home's greenhouse gas emissions as well.

Queensland will also be the very first state in Australia to implement a 'ban the banners' policy that prevents bodies corporate and developers from banning sustainable and affordable design options. This has significant benefits for homeowners state-wide but particularly for my electorate, which is one of the fastest growing areas in all of Australia. It includes providing potential purchasers with greater choice of features and design options that are much more sustainable. There is also a very positive impact on housing affordability. The 'ban the banners' initiative aligns with the government's Queensland Housing Affordability Strategy, which aims to help boost housing affordability in our state.

With the busy M1 being the eastern border of my electorate in Albert, I am very pleased that the bill is addressing the impacts of transport noise in the state. The bill supports the introduction of a proposed mandatory code for residential buildings located along major transport corridors. This code aims to streamline current processes that address transport noise and provide a consistent state-wide approach. Currently, the state government places covenants on noise affected residential properties near key

transport routes and establishes whether there should be any extra building requirements. This is currently determined on a case-by-case basis. Where a building application is made for a property that is the subject of such a covenant, the applicant must have an acoustic report prepared. The government then assesses each individual application and associated conditions. As you would expect, this process increases the costs involved and the time taken for final building approvals. The problem is that it provides little up-front or consistent design directions for developers, and it is something which developers in the electorate of Albert have spoken to me about.

The bill also supports a nation-leading strategy to save koalas in South-East Queensland. An amendment to the Acquisition of Land Act will give new powers to the state that will enable conservation of critical koala habitats through compulsory acquisition of land, something that I strongly support. This power is applicable to land that is not currently occupied and outside the urban footprint. It is also only specific to local government areas in South-East Queensland—that is, Logan, the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Ipswich, the Gold Coast and the Redlands.

This amendment supports the government's Koala Response Strategy, which has been in place since December 2008. This strategy aims to protect our unique koalas and increase the expanse of their habitats in the south-east corner of our state by 2020. I congratulate Minister Hinchliffe on leading Queensland in building sustainability, and I strongly commend the bill to the House.