



Speech by

**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

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## **SUSTAINABLE PLANNING BILL**

**Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (8.36 pm): In rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Sustainable Planning Bill 2009. I indicate that the LNP will be supporting the bill's passage through the House; however, there are some concerns about the bill in its current state. In his second reading speech the minister stated that new legislation will ensure that state and local governments are responsive to the rapidly changing needs of the community and there is implementation of streamlined processes to achieve clarity for the community, industry and government.

The minister said that the improved framework would offer accountability. It will make all stakeholders accountable for their actions with a no-nonsense planning framework that drives a culture of working together within a specified time period. I cannot see that being a problem. I think this is a good proposition.

At this point I would like to bring to the attention of the House an issue that I was hoping this sustainable planning legislation would resolve. A development in my electorate has been delayed for nearly five years. I hope this debate enlightens the minister to the impediments community members deal with when applying for mineral development leases.

On 10 June 2005 the then Land and Resources Tribunal recommended the application by SiSoil technologies be granted at Ravenshoe. Since then this application has been gathering dust in the department of natural resources, mines and energy. Despite numerous calls to the department and the minister himself, the company has been told repeatedly that the application would be granted shortly. They have committed a large amount of money—millions of dollars—and time based on the assumption that the lease would be granted. But contracts, orders and expressions of interest have expired. This has resulted in lost potential benefits to the local economy, local employment and business profits.

There has been no accountability from the department on this issue. Its continual concern about ownership of a couple of rusted out pieces of machinery and dongas on the lease have cost the company and the state millions in lost revenue. In other words, this company has put in for a mineral development lease and because a company that had previously worked that lease had left an old broken down dozer and a donga this applicant has been held up for four years. I encourage the minister to investigate that issue so that we get the ball rolling.

I think it would be a great idea for the implementation of these clear, streamlined processes to begin right here within the government's own departments to clear the backlogs of applications that are limiting the potential of business growth and investment in Queensland. I ask the minister to show some common sense and step in and solve this problem.

The member for Gympie said in his contribution that he hoped that the planning remained in touch with local communities, that it reflects the needs of communities and adapts to local issues unique to differing communities across the state. For this to occur there needs to be less state involvement and more community involvement.

Of concern when it was first put forward was the 2025 Far North Queensland plan. Across the area many people felt that this was an imposition on them by bureaucrats from the south-east corner who are so removed from their reality they could not possibly understand the issues and were not in a position to attempt to address them. There is a general mistrust of government in the Far North, and it is easy to understand why the people think like this—forced council amalgamations, the closing or the downgrading of our rural hospitals, the ignorance of the government with regard to ongoing problems as a result of flood devastation and neglect of state roads. People are adamant that government thinks it knows best about what is good for these communities, but the government does not know. Hopefully, this legislation will give local governments more control and less dictatorship from Brisbane based bureaucrats.

The minister said that, with continual high population growth, it is imperative that a quick, efficient process for planning and development is operational which stimulates the economy while protecting our iconic lifestyle. I would like to see this reflected in the government's response to the issue of the flying foxes at Yungaburra. Since Cyclone Larry, tens of thousands of flying foxes have flocked to the residential area of Yungaburra. I received an email from concerned residents pleading for my assistance. I mention this because the bill is also about protecting our iconic lifestyle. I really believe we need to protect the iconic lifestyle of residents.

In relation to sustainable planning, I supported the Moranbah pipeline. I think I was a candidate at the time. The first issue I raised was water infrastructure in those mining communities. I could see that if something was not done, there would be a catastrophe. The state government came forward and constructed that pipeline at a cost of \$300 million. However, at the same time we had proposed—and this is where I believe sustainable planning and good management is important—the Urannah Dam at a cost of \$150 million which would have provided 150,000 megalitres as opposed to the Moranbah pipeline which provides 20,000 megalitres each year at a cost of \$300 million.

Recently I was there for the 50-year celebration of the opening of the Tinaroo Dam, which irrigates 9,000 hectares and has 407,000 megalitres, and the Burdekin Dam, which has 1.8 million megalitres. When we look at the Traveston Dam, stage one is proposed to provide 70,000 megalitres and it is a \$1.5 billion process. I believe that will end up providing 180,000 megalitres.

When it comes to sustainable planning—and this is what this bill is about—we need to ensure that decisions are made based on sustainable planning and are not political decisions. That is what this Traveston Dam is all about. This is a political decision; it is not about sustainable planning. As honourable members are aware, Goss developed a 'no new dams' policy, Peter Beattie developed a 'no new dams' policy, but there was a water crisis in the south-east corner. To solve that problem when going to an election, he had to bring about a perception that he was doing something about water infrastructure. I mention this because this dam is costing billions of dollars and it is not about sustainable management or sustainable planning. He chose a site that was neglected by SunWater, neglected by Goss and neglected by Borbidge and he said, 'I will build my dam there.' It did not cost him politically because the MPs in the area were conservative MPs. This is all about a political decision. It is not about sustainable planning or providing water to the south-east corner. It is only 180,000 megalitres with stage one providing 70,000 megalitres, which is a pittance. Even the small dams that have been proposed for the Bowen Basin are bigger than that.

This will come back to haunt Labor, with Kevin Rudd handing out \$900 to eligible taxpayers to solve this global economic crisis. What is needed is infrastructure—good infrastructure. The government should have been upgrading the Gregory Development Road, the Kennedy Development Road and the Peak Downs Highway. If that had happened we would have seen infrastructure, progress and jobs. This will come back to bite Labor. This is September 2009; just watch what happens, because it is easy to hand out money on a credit card but it has to be paid back.

There has been a lot of mining activity over the years. I am very pro mining and I know the state government is very pro mining because it is very supportive of the royalties it receives from the mining companies. There is also a need to protect prime agricultural land because, it must be acknowledged, the agricultural industry is a \$13 billion industry. When considering the use of that prime agricultural land, we need to ensure that we do not focus on quick royalties from mining which would lead to the destruction of that prime agricultural land for future generations.

This legislation also talks about climate change, rising sea levels et cetera. I fully accept climate change. We have winter, autumn, spring and summer. However, I do not believe we will be alive to see the sea levels rise by a metre. At the time of the first settlement we had the Gibson Desert and the Simpson Desert. That was before the industrial revolution. We will not see sea levels rise by a metre. This has been used as an example of the effect of climate change. If we can use the argument of climate change to fast-track development, I have no problem in supporting that.

In relation to wild rivers, there is a big concern among Aboriginal people.

**Mr O'Brien:** Why did you vote for it? Why did you come into this House and vote for it? Why did you vote for it? You voted for it twice.

**Mr KNUTH:** I challenge the member for Cook to have a look at the last debate and see our position on it. We opposed it.

**Mr O'Brien:** You voted for it twice.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Cook!

**Mr KNUTH:** Have a look at the last legislation—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Dalrymple, resume your seat. Member for Cook, I am on my feet. I would ask the member for Dalrymple to direct his remarks through the chair.

**Mr KNUTH:** This is a very big concern amongst Aboriginal people because it is the end of sustainable development in those communities. It is probably the only opportunity they have to progress and develop in those areas. The area that is the most useful resource is the very area that the government is kicking them out of. Those areas are just becoming a breeding ground for feral animals and noxious weeds. Members should go up and have a look at these so-called wild rivers. There is a perception that there are these lovely, beautiful streams with barramundi jumping out of the water and a clean river system where people can walk and picnic. That is not the case. These areas are a breeding ground for feral animals and noxious weeds. You would not be able to walk through them. The very people who look after those river systems are the people the government is kicking out. I wanted to bring that to the attention of the House.