



Speech by

Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Thursday, 3 September 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Far North Queensland Regional Plan

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.17 am): I would like to advise the House of the implementation of the Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031. Since its release on 13 February 2009, good planning has occurred on a number of fronts, with councils working quickly to amend planning schemes to reflect the regional plan. Cairns Regional Council and participating agencies have already undertaken significant work to prepare a structure plan for the major urban growth area of Mount Peter.

On Friday I chaired the initial regional coordination committee meeting with mayors and other stakeholders, including the members for Mulgrave, Cook and Barron River. Unfortunately, the member for Cairns and Minister for Local Government was unwell on the day, but we have since discussed the outcomes of the initial RCC. Following the state government's approval of new planning scheme provisions for the Edmonton town centre, the Cairns Regional Council has proposed further planning scheme amendments for both the Edmonton and Smithfield town centres.

The neighbouring Tablelands Regional Council has also resolved to amalgamate four existing plans under a new planning scheme. That has been through great leadership from Tom Gilmore—someone who knows what leadership is about, although maybe not from this side of the House. This new planning scheme will deliver consistent planning policy throughout the Tablelands.

The Cassowary Coast Regional Council is also reviewing its planning schemes against the FNQ Regional Plan. In addition, a planning scheme is underway for Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council and preparations are also underway to provide a planning scheme for the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council.

In accordance with the Far North Queensland Regional Plan, the RCC discussed a draft five-year action plan to guide implementation by state agencies, local government and other organisations. The Bligh government understands that strategic planning helps clarify the potential infrastructure needs of different regions. State agencies are well advanced in planning for the Cairns Bruce Highway upgrade, the Cairns transit network, a principal cycle network plan, transport network planning for the Tablelands and the Cassowary Coast, and a regional water supply strategy.

The rapid progress proves the regional plan is providing a strong regional framework to progress and expedite a range of state initiatives. I encourage all levels of government and community organisations to work together to achieve the desired regional outcomes of the Far North Queensland Regional Plan. This plan is vital to getting the balance right where the rainforest meets the reef.