



Speech by

Vicky Darling

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Hansard Thursday, 3 September 2009

SUSTAINABLE PLANNING BILL

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (6.16 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Sustainable Planning Bill 2009. Throughout the review of the Integrated Planning Act stakeholders consistently indicated support for the fundamentals of the integrated planning system. The fundamental principles underpinning the planning system and integrated development assessment system support performance based planning and allow for flexibility and innovation in planning and development outcomes. This offers our communities the benefit of land use planning and development that is reflective of their needs and demands with sustainable environmental, social and economic outcomes. Other principles underpinning the legislation include infrastructure planning and charging, state planning policies, state reserve powers, regional planning provisions, designation of land for community infrastructure and the private certification of building work.

These principles have been retained in this bill and are reflected in the purpose and objectives. These elements are also vital in ensuring communities that land use planning development decisions are properly informed by state level, regional level and local level matters, right down to the details of the construction of the building themselves—a truly integrated and balanced approach to our community's futures.

The bill states that the purpose of the act is to seek to achieve ecological sustainability in three ways: firstly, by managing the process by which development takes place, including ensuring the process is accountable, effective and efficient and delivers sustainable outcomes; secondly, by managing the effects of development on the environment, including managing the use of premises; and, thirdly, by continuing the coordination and integration of planning at the local, regional and state levels.

The definition of 'ecological sustainability' stated in the IPA has been retained in clause 8 of the bill, which emphasises the coordination and integration of planning at the three levels at which it occurs in Queensland; namely, the regional, state and local levels. This definition draws on the goal, core objectives and guiding principles of the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments on 7 December 1992 but which has been expanded to include planning concepts about amenity, including the social and physical wellbeing of people in communities.

The bill continues to facilitate coordination and integration of planning by: providing for robust communication and consultation within and between levels of government as part of the processes it establishes for making planning instruments; establishing regional planning committees to coordinate planning at a regional level; establishing the scope of planning instruments in a way which requires or facilitates coordination of different aspects of planning; and establishing a clear hierarchy of planning instruments which interact in such a way as to result in integrated planning outcomes.

Currently IPA identifies six ways that ecological sustainability may be advanced. These include: ensuring decision-making processes are accountable, coordinated and efficient and take account of short- and long-term environmental effects of development at local, regional, state and wider levels; ensuring the sustainable use of renewable natural resources and the prudent use of non-renewable natural resources; and, finally, avoiding, if practicable, or otherwise lessening adverse environmental effects of development.

These provisions have been retained in this bill. However, the bill also modernises the purpose to include specific reference to contemporary issues such as climate change, peak oil issues, urban congestion, human health impacts, housing choice and diversity and economic diversity. The bill therefore gives explicit recognition to these contemporary issues to ensure that plan making and decision making involves consideration of these issues. This modernisation ensures that these emerging issues are specifically taken into account in building and planning for our communities. Our diverse communities will be assured that these key challenges in our future are going to be actively considered in the future of our communities.

With the proliferation of environmental concerns at an international and domestic level there will be an evolving number of treaty obligations, requirements and standards relating to issues regarding climate change and peak oil. While these principles may not all be incorporated in state legislation and binding on decision makers, they should still be relevant considerations to aid in the application of the bill when made as an act. By identifying these issues as part of the purpose and objects, the legislation demonstrates that it is progressive and responsive to the political and social environment and ensures our communities will be planned and developed with these contemporary issues actively in mind.

Another contemporary issue addressed in the bill relates to housing affordability. This government addressed this issue last year through the housing affordability strategy. The Fitzgibbon urban development area in my electorate of Sandgate is one plank of this strategy and is delivering affordable housing opportunities for Queenslanders. Stages 1 and 2 have already sold out. The average price of homes in these two stages is \$377,000. The demand for affordable housing is so high that the Urban Land Development Authority is now working to bring stages 3 and 4 forward at Fitzgibbon, and I look forward to their release in coming months. Housing affordability is a key issue for our communities and even more so in our current economic climate. I am very pleased that the legislation reflects this need. I look forward to working further with the minister on making sure that we deliver an amazing community out at Fitzgibbon.

By specifying housing choice as a factor in achieving ecological sustainability the bill makes clear that weight must be given to economic and social interests in plan making and development assessment under the act. The bill further deals with this issue by making a number of improvements to streamline and simplify the development assessment system, therefore reducing transaction compliance and holding costs.

Finally, as Australia's fastest growing state we are seeing a proliferation of urban congestion in several areas across Queensland. The recently passed Planning (Urban Encroachment—Milton Brewery) Act 2009 seeks to protect the Milton Brewery from future nuisance claims by residents in encroaching developments. This legislation signifies this government's proactive approach to our changing environment. It also signifies that this government's approach to solving these issues for its communities is an integrated one—that complementary strategies are being and will be pursued. As the key piece of legislation to govern planning and development in Queensland, it is therefore sensible to include the increasing challenge of managing urban congestion as one factor decision makers must have regard to in administering the act.

For over 10 years the IPA has provided a robust framework for the planning and development assessment system in Queensland. The emphasis on achieving ecological sustainability has placed Queensland at the leading edge of planning practice. It is clear the principles of IPA are sound and strongly supported by stakeholders.

This bill provides a number of initiatives designed to build on these principles by delivering an improved planning and development system while maintaining the original purpose and objects of the Integrated Planning Act. By giving explicit recognition to contemporary issues such as climate change and the like, this bill ensures the principles expounded in the original act continue to be relevant for today and into the future.

I congratulate departmental officials on their hard work. I congratulate the minister on bringing forward this bill. I commend the bill to the House.