



Speech by

Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Thursday, 11 February 2010

MOTION: SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND REGIONAL PLAN

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (10.21 pm): I and the LNP support the concept and the intent of the South East Queensland Regional Plan and the broader planning framework. The framework it establishes and the goals it sets out to achieve are sensible and necessary. As I see it, the plan is about managing population growth, identifying and delivering infrastructure, supporting ongoing local food production, setting aside green space for recreational and environmental purposes and investing in industry and employment. In a fast-growing corridor such as South-East Queensland such goals are vital. They will enable us to protect the lifestyle we enjoy to enhance the livability of our cities and towns whilst not closing the door on natural population growth and domestic and international migration.

There are many positives about the overall planning framework, the principles and guidelines within the South East Queensland Regional Plan. However, there is one glaring negative: this government's botched implementation of that framework, those principles and guidelines. I have on numerous occasions informed this House of the consequences of this abysmal implementation. I have listed example after example of Glass House constituents disastrously affected by what can only be described as these mind-boggling decisions. I have talked to the Webbs of Woombye whose property meets all the guidelines for addition but whose submission was rejected. I have spoken of how the one-size-fits-all approach has impacted on families such as the Anketells of Flaxton and the Martins of Beerwah. I have outlined the astonishing omission of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council supported submission including Stewart Skerman's property at Beerwah. I have presented the unjustness of excluding a property surrounded by development and public transport infrastructure owned by the Horne family in the Glass House Mountains.

I believe these examples compel the government to review how it makes its zoning decisions with regard to the regional plan. I believe the government must go further than just consultation; it must apply a level of scientific rigour to its assessments. After all, urban and regional planning is a science. At a minimum that scientific rigour must include ground truthing. I know that planners are taught these skills—at least they were 15 years ago. I know because I sat alongside planners as I undertook my studies in geomorphology, biogeography, GIS and remote sensing at the University of Queensland. The use of simple scientific processes will go a long way to not only get the decisions right but reassure the broader community of the objectivity of those decisions.

The plan and its related documents fail South-East Queenslanders in other ways. I refer to page 12 of the plan and acknowledge also the links with the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program. Page 12 of the plan and SEQIPP in its entirety suggest that part of the framework is to ensure growth is complemented by infrastructure development. However, every Queenslanders knows that this just has not happened. SEQIPP is failing. Project times and budgets are constantly delayed and project start dates are constantly shifted into the far distant future. Again, I have provided examples of this failure before, but let me mention just three again: the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, the D'Aguiar Highway and the north coast rail duplication.

The consequences of such failures are plain to see. The construction industry is criticising the government because delays impact long-term corporate planning. The people of the north coast continue to rely on an overstretched health system, a health system that becomes more dangerous by the day. The

people of the north coast continue to traverse overcrowded and unsafe roads. The people of the north coast continue to access inferior public transport options. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council goes toe to toe with the government over fast-tracking developments. Do you know what? I do not blame them. If this government wants the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to develop Caloundra South it must live up to the expectations it has set for itself in the South East Queensland Regional Plan and SEQIPP. If it cannot deliver what it has promised when it has promised at the cost it has promised, this government has no right to force a council to put its people at an unacceptable health risk and condemn them to gridlock on coast roads.

The members opposite will use the excuse of population growth—excuses, excuses, excuses. I am sorry, but the people of Glass House are sick of hearing them, especially when they know they are just not true. The government had warning. I know it did. When I joined the Queensland Public Service back in 2000 it was not long before I personally received briefings from the Planning Information and Forecasting Unit and the Office of Economic and Statistical Research on anticipated population growth. What is more, the government was in a purple patch with regard to royalties and revenue. The government had the wherewithal to begin implementing its infrastructure plans but, no, instead it ignored the warnings from its own forecasting and statistical units, it frittered away the rivers of gold and it is still playing catch-up today. Stop the excuses and start delivering.

As I conclude I again reiterate my support for the intent of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. However, I am disappointed that yet again this government demonstrates its ability to produce a glossy plan and, again, this government has failed Queenslanders through its inept implementation.