



Speech by


**Ian Walker**

**MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD**

Hansard Wednesday, 31 October 2012

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE**

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (5.15 pm): I am pleased to rise to engage in this debate and in particular to concentrate on that part of the committee's hearings that related to the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, which is the department in which I serve as assistant minister to the Deputy Premier. As a new member I came here with I suppose a very innocent and wide eyed view of the role of the committee system, which I expected was a fair dinkum question and answer session attempting to gain some information as to the government's position in relation to the budget that had been presented. I must say that for some of the time that is exactly what happened, and I will come back to that a little later. But it was surprising to me to see so much of the committee's time taken in concentrating on the airfares of the Deputy Premier as he travelled to and from his place of residence. I felt that was disappointing and a cheap shot.

The Deputy Premier is a member of this House representing a regional area of Queensland and he is entitled to take reasonable travel provisions to allow him to do his job. I more than anybody else know how hard the Deputy Premier works. I work with him every day. I know the late hours that he works. I know the fact that his schedule is not such that you will know from the beginning of the day as to when that day will end. To say that he could arrange his schedule around a very limited number of commercial flights to his place of residence is unrealistic. I think that instead of criticising the Deputy Premier for what he has been doing, we should applaud the fact that we are providing, through this budget, appropriate support to regional members of this House to enable them to hold high executive office within this state. I believe that this House should support that position.

Having said that, we did move on to what I thought the real role of the committee was and that was to understand where the government is heading in the area of state development, infrastructure and planning. In my area of planning reform we were able to inform the committee of the great steps that we have been able to take since we were elected to make sure that our planning system is made smoother, is made more transparent and is made easier for people to access. We have done things such as introducing the temporary state planning policy called Planning for Prosperity. That planning policy requires government departments and local governments, in preparing town plans and in making planning decisions, to not only look at all the other range of state planning policies that there are—and these are generally cast in the negative, 'You won't do this. You won't do that'—but also ensure that their decisions provide for the economic wellbeing and advancement of their communities. That needs to be one of the key features balanced in the whole planning process. The Deputy Premier has promulgated the Planning for Prosperity temporary state planning policy and it is already making a difference to the way in which decisions are made within the planning system in this state.

We are moving towards a single state planning policy that will be easier to come to grips with, will not have the complicated provisions of the present 14 or 15 state planning policies and will provide for higher level planning requirements and not prescriptive requirements as are presently in the suite of state planning policies. We have lowered referral triggers. These are the triggers that cause planning applications to come up from local government to the state government where there is a state interest involved. We are requiring our own agencies to put their planning requirements upfront into town plans and regional plans, and not to be involved in each and every planning application as it comes before councils. The departments have done a great job in reducing those triggers. Our advice is that 1,500 applications that would have come to us last year will not come to us this year because those triggers have been reduced and there is no need for state involvement at the individual planning application level.

There is statutory regional planning, into which the Deputy Premier is taking a great interest and putting a lot of effort. That is going to change the face of planning within this state. There is the reform of the Sustainable Planning Act through legislation that is presently before the House. We look forward to the report of the committee that has examined that legislation. That gives us another great opportunity to improve our planning system and to make it, as the Premier has required it to be, the best in Queensland. I was pleased to be able to present to the committee and I look forward to its report being accepted by this House.