




Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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REGIONAL PLANNING INTERESTS BILL; PROTECTION OF PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND AND OTHER LAND FROM COAL SEAM GAS MINING BILL

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (5.46 pm): I rise this afternoon to speak briefly in support of the Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013. The Regional Planning Interests Bill is part of a suite of important planning reforms by this government to reduce red tape and return powers to local governments. I would like to highlight some of the significant planning reforms undertaken by this government over the last two years. Our efforts to date have been boosting confidence and optimism. The creation of a single state planning policy has replaced the 14 ad hoc, disjointed policies that existed under Labor and consolidated the state's interests and policies into one document.

Another piece of significant planning reform is the new State Assessment Referral Agency, or SARA. SARA replaced seven separate referral agencies with a single agency. It is a one-stop shop for applicants to receive a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to state development assessment. As reported in the House yesterday by the Deputy Premier, as well as winning the Planning Institute of Australia's 2013 Queensland award for improving planning processes, SARA has won the Planning Institute of Australia's 2014 national award for improving planning processes. SARA has been recognised by Queensland and now Australia as a significant planning reform.

Within the local government areas of Logan, Redlands and the Gold Coast, which contains my electorate of Southport, the Gold Coast SARA office has, since 1 July 2013, received approximately 650 applications and requests, of which 600 have already been determined. Since our first annual planning forum in early 2013, we have been hosting regular monthly forums with stakeholders including industry, local government and consultant planners. Last week the Deputy Premier hosted our second planning forum at the Royal International Convention Centre. The mood and optimism amongst industry leaders was palpable. Clearly, they are pleased with the progress our government has been making in respect of red-tape reduction and planning reform.

The Regional Planning Interests Bill before the House establishes a regulatory framework to apply existing, well used land use planning concepts contained in regional plans to resource activities and regulated activities. The Regional Planning Interests Bill will deliver on the LNP's commitment to protect prime agricultural land and resolve land use conflicts where they arise.

The assessment process established by this bill restores the balance of power and provides certainty for rural producers and resource companies when new mining or gas developments are proposed. This bill will ensure ongoing growth in jobs and opportunities in regional Queensland.

I want to acknowledge the work of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee for their comprehensive and thorough review of the bill. I particularly congratulate the committee chair, the member for Gympie, David Gibson, for his outstanding leadership in balancing the many competing views of stakeholders. I also want to congratulate the Deputy Premier's staff, the Director-General David Edwards, Deputy Director-General Greg Chemello and his team for their contributions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in the House this evening and speak in support of this bill.