




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2016

PLANNING BILLS (COGNATE DEBATE)

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.20 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill and welcome, on behalf of the residents of Brisbane Central, legislation that will create a simpler, more efficient planning system that will enable communities, councils and industry to shape the future of their suburbs and streets. It will deliver greater transparency and accountability for decisions about development applications and tighter decision rules for councils. The bill will give residents their voices back, the voices that they lost in the planning process, and support responsible development in the community that will take into account the changing face of our suburbs, communities and environment.

We welcome the assessment process, which will be more streamlined. The bill will provide genuine public participation and engagement in the planning process by outlining minimum public notification time frames for plan making and development assessment and works towards protecting our environment. The bill will introduce new clearer decision rules for code and impact assessable applications. Code assessment has been significantly tightened and must be carried out only against assessment benchmarks such as a local government planning scheme or the planning regulation. The loophole to go outside the code, which is one of the biggest complaints that I get from residents, will be closed. Industry will have greater certainty as the bill will make it clear that 'code' means 'code'. Applications for code assessment will be decided within the expectations of the community which will be established at the plan-making stage. Currently there is no public consultation for code assessment and this bill introduces that.

This bill will require decision-makers for the first time to publish a notice with their reasons for approving and refusing development applications, therefore providing further transparency measures. I was astonished to hear that the only person who had to deliver reasons was the minister, the Deputy Premier, and no other person had to do so. This turns that on its head and gives residents the reasons they make the decisions that they make. This will help the community understand what matters the decision-maker considered in assessing an application, how these were considered and the reasons for the decision. I know my residents of Brisbane Central want that more than anything. The reinstatement of appeal rights for objectors will also be a feature of this bill so that they are without fear of cost orders against them.

I congratulate the Deputy Premier on providing stronger protection for places which have a cultural heritage significance and for including the provision for the role of the Queensland Heritage Council to have a say in decisions about the demolition or substantial demolition of a state heritage place. This legislation takes a balanced approach to planning, it gives residents back their voice, it gives the reasons for decisions that are made, and 'code' means 'code'. I commend the bill to the House.