




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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PLANNING BILLS (COGNATE DEBATE)

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (10.25 pm): I rise to speak in support of the planning bills. In Queensland the current planning and development assessment system is the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. This act, at over 700 pages in length, is a complicated quagmire that is difficult to navigate and in which locating useful information can be a bit like finding a needle in a haystack. Despite this, there are elements of the act that I and many stakeholders agree are very sound. The planning bills have been developed to provide Queenslanders with a system that will provide better local planning in the development of a proactive community consultation system. This has been a matter of particular concern for our government and I am proud to be able to stand here and promote a bill which allows all members of Queensland's community access to a planning system that provides more transparency, tighter rules for councils and greater certainty about development.

The opportunity to critique and evaluate proposals is something that we as members of parliament have the chance to do nearly every parliamentary sitting. Whether it be in a committee discussion or on the floor of parliament, the ability to question, evaluate and decide on matters is something that we should never take for granted. That is why I believe it is imperative that our constituents and their communities are provided with the same opportunities that we have here to play active and effective roles in the plan-making process. This bill allows us to achieve this in a number of ways. Local government planning schemes must now provide a minimum of 40 business days for a proposed planning scheme and 20 business days for a proposed amendment. In a similar vein, the 40 business day minimum for the creation of new instruments will now be the standard alongside a 20 business day minimum for amending an instrument. Finally, regional plans must have a 60 business day minimum public notification period for their making and a 30 business day period for their amendment.

These consultative periods, which are an improvement on the previous 30 business day public notification period for making a planning scheme, will provide communities across Queensland with the opportunity to actively engage in the planning process to a larger degree than ever before. This is reflective of the people of Queensland's desire to have a more active part in the planning of their state. I applaud the Deputy Premier for listening and taking into consideration the needs of our constituents. There will be instances, however, where there is no need for public notification. The situations where no public notification is given are referred to as code assessment. Code assessment in the past was loosely regulated and could potentially result in projects going ahead where there were a number of community issues and concerns. In a positive move, the Palaszczuk government has tightened code assessment and ensured that it is now a bounded assessment. This decision is at the heart of our government's commitment to greater transparency and accountability. No longer will there be a situation where there can be project approval without any sort of public consideration. In fact, all projects that will now be based on code assessment will be held against assessment benchmarks stated in a

categorising instrument such as the local government planning scheme. This will ensure that no longer will there be a possibility that a project can be approved without scrutiny and will provide transparency and accountability to these projects.

Importantly, this bill will ensure that when communities have a legitimate complaint regarding a proposed project in their area they will have the assurance that if they lose their case they will not be required to front the costs of the winning party as a term of settlement. Last year when the Palaszczuk government came into power, we said that we were a government that would honour our promises. These planning bills are our way of ensuring that the voices of the Queensland people are not drowned out when it is convenient. I commend the bill to the House.