




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPIT MASTER PLAN BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.09 pm): As a member of the planning committee it is a pleasure to rise to contribute to this bill today. I am quite sure that the Gold Coast holds fond memories for each and every member of this House regardless of where we were born and which electorate we represent. It is a beautiful city, one of the largest in Australia. For us Brisbane based members it is an escape within a day's reach. All of this is to say that it is vital we get this Gold Coast master plan right not just for Gold Coast residents, who obviously are very proud of the Spit, but for all the Queenslanders and, indeed, international tourists who love visiting too. Our tourism and community spaces are vitally important to creating jobs, creating emotional wellbeing in the community and preserving those special areas that the community treasures, and this is exactly what the Gold Coast Spit master plan is designed to do.

At the outset I commend the obviously large amount of work that has gone into getting this plan right—work from the department, the minister's office, the Gold Coast Waterways Authority not to mention the countless community groups—and the spirit in which they undertook the genuine and considered community engagement. This site has been under consideration and debate since before I was born. That is how far back interest in this site goes. There was a heavy weight of expectation that we get the balance right for this site.

Late last year our committee had the opportunity to head down to the Spit a week before Christmas—what a treat—and see firsthand the many diverse uses that the site currently has but also the potential future options and the opportunities yet to be explored. For those unfamiliar with this particular patch of the coast, it is home to Palazzo Versace, Sea World and its Nara resort, the Sheraton Mirage as well as Doug Jennings Park, which has hosted some fantastic large-scale events. As we have heard, it also includes Curlew Island, which is home to the delightful curlew population that roost there. I think Curlew Island has to be seen to be believed. It really is just a little bar of sand in the middle of the water. That is why it currently is not recognised, which this plan aims to address. It is a very crucial roosting site for curlews, which do need peace and quiet to maintain their population there. This is just a sample of the many and varied parts of the Spit. It gives honourable members a taste of the diversity of this site and the large number of groups that have a longstanding interest in the site that needed to be consulted.

As I said, the Spit has been the subject of longstanding interest on the Gold Coast. As any local member knows, when there is a large number of different community groups, businesses, Indigenous elders and more all holding strong and conflicting views on the future of the site, there is going to be keen interest. It is also very likely that it is going to take some time to negotiate an outcome that all members of the community feel addresses their feedback and their concerns. It is really critical when working on the future of a site like this one to get those different groups in the room together so they can hear from each other and work together to get a better outcome for the site. I really appreciate the importance of this process that has been undertaken to get the Gold Coast community on board with the future plan. Indeed, in my own community of Oxley we undertook a very similar process for the

former Oxley secondary school site. Taking the time to collate the many differing views, which can be a really tricky process, ultimately creates a much more exciting outcome for that community, and that is what we have seen with the Gold Coast Spit.

Oftentimes the quality of the process that is undertaken guarantees or determines the quality of the outcome for the site. We cannot take shortcuts in that process. I know from my own firsthand experience in Oxley that the end result is absolutely worth it, and that is what we have seen with the Spit Master Plan, too. I can confidently say as a result of participating in this kind of process myself that a master plan can be really fantastic and successful if you take the community with you over that period of months and years and get that outcome right.

The Spit Master Plan and my local Oxley PDA had a number of parallels. In Oxley we also had a wide variety of community groups. Similar to the master plan, we had a bit of a steering panel with the Oxley Progress Association and the Centenary and District Environment Action, led by a fantastic local person, Theresa Rich Hoyle. We had that process of engaging and working on the proposals, refining the proposals and then refining them some more to come up with the right plan for us. Through this sort of process you go through a lot of ideas which may ultimately be discarded before coming up with the right option. In this case, as with Oxley, it is a mixed use site where all of the different groups have had buy-in and they are all part of the outcome and the fantastic process we have seen for the Gold Coast master plan.

As I said, projects like this take a really long time and a lot of consultation has gone on. I place on the record my thanks to the many public servants who worked on the consultation and the fantastic team who briefed us on the day we visited as well as the committee secretariat, who always do a wonderful job. The final plan is a wonderful result. It is a credit to each of them. It is an award-winning plan; they have been recognised for their wonderful work in planning the Gold Coast Spit.

I really want to commend the Gold Coast community for embracing the opportunity to shape the future of this amazing site. I commend the bill to the House.