




Speech By  
**Hon. Charis Mullen**

**MEMBER FOR JORDAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 April 2024

**HOUSING AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY (PLANNING AND OTHER  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; BUILDING INDUSTRY FAIRNESS  
(SECURITY OF PAYMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. C MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.32 pm): I rise to speak on the cognate bills, but wish to focus my remarks on the Housing Availability and Affordability (Planning and Other Legislation Amendment) Bill 2023. I begin by commending the Minister for Housing on the significant policy work through our Homes for Queenslanders policy and the legislation before us that seeks to increase housing supply and provide for additional social and affordable housing.

In particular, I will refer to the matter relating to development control plans. It is not an area that most members have spoken about, but it is particularly important in my local community. Development control plans were created in the 1990s to manage larger-scale developments and have been maintained through a series of transitional provisions in successive planning acts in Queensland, and these include the Springfield Structure Plan in the Ipswich City Council area, Mango Hill Infrastructure DCP in the Moreton Bay Regional Council area, and Kawana Waters DCP1 in the Sunshine Coast regional area. Of course, Greater Springfield is an important part of the Jordan electorate and, as the local state member, I have a very strong interest in the continued success of this growing community.

Greater Springfield is somewhat unique in Queensland. It is a master planned community developed by a single master developer. The unique nature of how Greater Springfield has been developed has been with the continued focus on how we preserve the Springfield Structure Plan, which was approved in 1997 and is part of the Ipswich Planning Scheme. The Springfield Structure Plan was originally prepared as a development control plan under the now repealed Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act 1990. I have previously called the Springfield Structure Plan 'the great survivor'. It has survived not one, but three planning acts: the Integrated Planning Act 1997, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and most recently the Planning Act 2016. With each act, the Springfield Structure Plan has been included in grandfathering provisions which seek to continue the recognition of the development of Greater Springfield. However, the 2022 legal matter, JH Northlakes Pty Ltd v Moreton Bay Regional Council, found that development assessments in DCPs must be made, assessed and decided using the former Integrated Development Assessment System, or IDAS as it was called, which was created under the now repealed Integrated Planning Act 1997. Of course, this judgement has raised some real concerns in relation to previous planning approvals which may have been made since the repeal of the IPA. Therefore, the bill seeks to validate previously granted development approvals in DCP areas and ensures there is a modern assessment framework by applying the development assessment process under the current Planning Act.

Much has changed since the 1990s, including the community's expectations regarding development. This has been particularly exemplified in the recent approvals of what is known as the Cherish land in the suburb of Springfield. This large tract of land has been earmarked and zoned for residential development since 1997 in the Springfield Structure Plan and in the Ipswich Planning

Scheme. It is also contained within the urban footprint in the SEQ Regional Plan. Until now, the owners of the land have not sought to develop this site and, naturally, residents who have moved to the area since this time have assumed that the land was part of a conservation area. This is in fact not the case and has led to some significant concerns in relation to the development of the site. Because of the historic legacy planning through the Springfield Structure Plan, the state government is not able to intervene and prevent development from occurring on this site. The matter has now been referred for a decision under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act—the EPBC Act—and is currently before the federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water for assessment.

Whilst I certainly have sympathy for the local residents who live near and around the development site, including myself and my family, I am also very cognisant that planning is really important given the significant economic investment that was made at the time of the structure plan approvals, including major infrastructure delivery, including water, sewerage and roads. Of course, we also need more housing supply, and this will help. Where possible, I have encouraged the developers within the Springfield Structure Plan to carefully manage the environmental impacts of their developments whilst also seeking assurances regarding revegetation and additional voluntary measures.

I was pleased to see that, in relation to the Cherish land, the recently approved precinct plan by the Ipswich City Council did include larger conservation buffers—500-metre buffers—as opposed to the average 80 metres, and also a large area of land that will now not be developed but remain as bushland. I note Springfield City Group has also sought some further changes in relation to when state interests are considered in planning approvals under the Springfield Structure Plan. The department has provided a comprehensive response to the parliamentary committee on this matter, noting that the state will continue to require consideration of state interests in DCP areas, and this will continue through the known and contemporary State Assessment and Referral Agency, or SARA.

As outlined in the SEQ Regional Plan, by 2046 our population is expected to be about six million, which is an additional 2.2 million people requiring almost 900,000 new homes and almost one million new jobs. Greater Springfield continues to play a key role in accommodating some of this expected future population. Ensuring planning certainty through the bill in relation to the Springfield Structure Plan is important in addressing this significant need. I commend the bill to the House.