

**Question on Notice  
No. 630  
Asked on 10 September 2013**

MR KNUTH asked the Premier (MR NEWMAN)—

With reference to the Premier's election commitment to empower Queensland communities with the responsibility for planning and development at a local level, through decision making by local governments that are transparent and ultimately accountable to local people—

Will the Premier advise how the government is progressing with this election commitment to return planning powers to local councils?

ANSWER:

Since coming to office the Government has progressed a range of initiatives to deliver on its commitment to empower local governments to plan for their local communities.

The Queensland Government is committed to partnering with and empowering local government in the delivery of Priority Development Areas under the *Economic Development Act 2012*. Local governments can seek delegation of the responsibility for plan preparation and development assessment in these areas and it has been and will continue to be, the Government's policy to support such requests.

In the past year, a number of planning reform initiatives have been progressed as part of the Government's ambition to have the best land-use planning and development assessment system in the nation. This program of reform aims to streamline assessment and approval processes, reduce red tape and empower councils to better plan for their communities.

As a result, we are delivering a new, robust focus for long-term regional plans; a new single and transparent State Planning Policy providing key guidance to local government and industry on the state's planning interests; the new State Assessment and Referral Agency; and a new infrastructure planning and charging framework to provide a more equitable and transparent framework for industry and local government.

The State Planning Policy, expected to be operational by the end of 2013, will be the key framework for setting the scene for planning and development in our State. It will encourage flexible, innovative and locally appropriate approaches to planning and empower and support local governments to make the best planning decisions for their communities. Draft regional plans have been prepared for the Central Queensland, Darling Downs, and Cape York regions, with the review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan recently commenced. These regional plans aim to provide greater certainty in relation to the State's interest within a region as well as recognise and respect the role of the local governments in planning and development.

On 12 June 2013, the Honourable Jeff Seeney MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning announced the next logical step in this reform process, an overhaul of the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*.

The introduction of new planning legislation into Parliament next year is the next step in reform, which follows on and complements the new approaches to be achieved through the State Assessment and Referral Agency, new regional plans and the single State Planning Policy.