



Speech By
Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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PLANNING BILLS (COGNATE DEBATE)

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (8.39 pm): I rise to make some brief comments about the passage of these planning bills through the House tonight. To begin with I commend the shadow minister, the member for Mansfield, Mr Ian Walker, for the contribution that he made to the House; a very detailed and a very knowledgeable contribution that I will try not to emulate or to repeat. I would commend anyone who has a genuine interest in the process that has led to these bills being in the House tonight to consider well the comments that Mr Walker made. I thank him for some of the generous comments that he made about my role in this whole process.

This process started shortly after we came to power in the 2012 election. It was a major reform to the planning process in Queensland. It was not reform for reform's sake. It was not reform to change what the previous government had done, like so much of what this government has done over the last 12 or 14 months. It was not reform that was motivated by spite and a political desire to put things back some other way. It was reform that was motivated by clear messages from the community, from everyone who was involved; clear messages about the restrictive nature of the planning process that was in place that was adding to the cost of housing for young Queenslanders, that was making it difficult for developers to invest the money that was necessary to ensure that there was affordable housing available for Queenslanders, that there was economic growth and that there were jobs involved in the construction sector that were available to young Queenslanders.

This government and its members on the other side of the House talk endlessly about jobs, but it is all words. At the end of the day if you are serious about creating jobs, if you are serious about economic growth, you have to look at the elements that contribute to economic growth. You have to look at those elements that are restricting investment and economic growth. That is what this government has not done in the last 12 or 14 months. Our government had a Governing for Growth strategy. It was all about promoting economic growth and creating jobs; allowing people to invest in the four pillars of the economy and to create jobs for Queenslanders. The planning reform that we undertook was a central part of that Governing for Growth strategy. The bills before the House tonight are the culmination of that planning reform process.

There was so much more that went into that planning reform process over the three years that we were in government that the member for Mansfield, the member for Southport and I were involved in. It was a process that involved an enormous amount of consultation because we wanted to take all of the stakeholders with us. The commitment that I gave to taking all the stakeholders with us was the reason that these bills were not introduced into this House until November 2014. They would have been passed through this House early in 2015 in the first sitting of the House had the House sat in 2015 rather than the parliament being dissolved. It was a culmination of a long process that was about consultation. It was about ensuring that all of the stakeholders were on board, and they were, which is why we have to ask ourselves why it has been 14 months between then and these bills getting to the House tonight: 14 months when these reforms have been not in place, 14 months when investment has

been curtailed, 14 months when jobs have not been created, 14 months where Queenslanders have been denied affordable housing and where Queenslanders have been denied the jobs that are so important to the construction sector. These bills could have been passed through this House 14 months ago.

I understand that a new government might want to look at legislation such as this and apply their own philosophical bent to it, but I know that this is not what happened with these particular bills. These particular bills, like everything else in my department, were put through a microscopic process of examination trying to find something wrong, trying to find a political attack point on me as the minister and on our government. The jobs and the investment that Queensland needed came second, was put aside, while that forensic analysis took place. They turned the department upside down trying to find some sort of political attack point. They could not find anything. They had to manufacture something about the Royalties for Regions and misuse the Coordinator-General's process to produce an affected political attack. That is the reason these bills are before the House tonight rather than 12 months ago when they should have been here.

The bills are, as I said, the culmination of a sophisticated and complex planning reform process that involved a whole range of other steps such as a new single state planning policy. There were 14 different planning policies when we came to government. Some of them were contradictory. Most of them were influenced by the dead hand of DERM. Remember that department, DERM, that killed everything? Most of them came from DERM. They constituted a pile of paper on the corner of my desk that was about 40 centimetres high. We put in place a single planning policy that, as the member for Mansfield said, won national planning awards. We instigated the State Assessment and Referral Agency that, once again, the member for Mansfield referred to and that has been a great success. We developed and put in place some new concepts, such as the priority development areas, that will be critical to this government delivering the stadium in Townsville, for example; that will be critical to delivering the Commonwealth Games village; and that will be critical to delivering the Toondah Harbour development. It was a brand new concept that was developed from the ground up that had to be consulted on and developed. Similarly with regional planning and the concept of priority agricultural areas. They were new concepts that we had to develop and involve stakeholders in a consultation process and bring them with us to this point where we could have new legislation introduced into the House tonight.

This new legislation is not something that has come from the activities of the current Labor government. They have put their own philosophical slant on it and that is as one would expect. It has taken them 14 months to do that. It has taken them 14 months because they have chosen to play politics rather than to do the job in the way that we did: to do the job of planning reform, to create the jobs for Queenslanders, to ensure that Queenslanders had affordable housing and that investors would invest here in Queensland rather than in other states.

There has been an enormous change to the planning process over that 4½ years. We changed a lot, but what we changed most of all was the attitude towards development, ensuring that the planning process enabled people to invest so that economic growth occurred, so that jobs were created and that affordable housing was provided. I listened to the contribution from the member for Sunnybank and I groaned and I shook my head because that is the sort of nonsense that has permeated the planning process in Queensland for too long. There has to be a balance between the competing interests of all stakeholders. At the end of the day there has to be economic growth, there has to be affordable housing and there has to be jobs for Queenslanders.