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GAWLER EAST, DEVELOPMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (15:25): On 21 May the Minister for Urban Development and Planning (Hon. Paul Holloway) released the development plan amendment (DPA) for Gawler East. On the same day, the Minister for Transport (Hon. Pat Conlon) released the Gawler Growth Areas Transport Framework, which informs the DPA in response to the new urban growth boundary that was announced in July 2007. Community consultation for that DPA closes today, and I have strongly encouraged people in the electorate to provide feedback on the DPA to DPAC.

Reaction to the DPA has been mixed. Some people oppose it outright, some welcome it, and many do not oppose it but have a range of concerns they would like addressed. Opposition to the DPA comes in two key forms. First, there are people who are concerned about some aspects of the DPA, for example, traffic management (firstly, the proposed connector roads and, secondly, how new traffic may impact on the centre of Gawler itself). There are also concerns about the character of the proposed development.

There are issues regarding environment and biodiversity and the provision of social infrastructure. The provision of physical infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and the like, have also raised concerns amongst the local community. The likely impact of the proposed neighbourhood retail centre in the proposed development on the existing commercial area has also created some debate. On the environment side, stormwater management has also engendered quite a bit of discussion. The lack of public transport in the locality has also been identified by the community as a key issue to be addressed.

These are legitimate concerns that need to be addressed if the proposed development is to be a net gain for the community. While I am personally confident that the physical infrastructure will be addressed through the cooperative discussions between the local and state governments and the developers, I think that some aspects of the DPA need more work.

The one area of particular concern to me is public transport. This part of the DPA is lacking in vision and in detail in my view. We need to get this right, because, if we do not, new residents who come to live in the area will adopt cars as the major form of transport and it will be hard to change them when public transport is later addressed. This has two impacts: first, it compounds the existing traffic problems in the town; and, secondly, it does not help promote environmental sustainability.

The second form of concern is the process itself. I think that the current statutory arrangements for DPAs are somewhat lacking and require a great deal of change if anxieties in the community are to be addressed. While the process is not an issue that is likely to be addressed by DPAC at its public meeting, I think it is one that should be because a great deal of community unease results from the lack of information caused by the process itself.

In an effort to address this lack of information, I arranged for a number of information sessions to be held with officers from the Department of Planning and Local Government and DTEI, who answered questions from local residents.

While the current statutory arrangements limited what the officers could address, nevertheless, they did help place the issues in context. I personally think that the statutory arrangements should be amended to enable more discussion around a draft DPA to take place before it is considered by DPAC. At the information sessions it became apparent that some people who had opposed elements of the DPA had not read the reports which informed it—a total of 21 reports.

I think that a more informed community would enable a more informed debate and discussion, which I

think is critical if a DPA is to be accepted by the community. While it is always difficult to assess what level of detail should be provided at a conceptual level, nevertheless, I believe a more inclusive process is required and would gain community support.

As public policy makers, we have an obligation to make sure that the process is less threatening to people as possible. Our economic and social wellbeing requires us to grow in a sustainable way. Proposed planned new developments can help us grow and also resolve some of the solutions of existing problems.

Time expired.