



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

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FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND 2025 REGIONAL PLAN

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (9.53 pm): Last Friday, 9 May the Premier and the Deputy Premier launched the draft Far North Queensland 2025 Regional Plan in Cairns amid a great deal of staged fanfare. I would like to make it clear that I am not opposed to good planning policy. In far-north Queensland we have a unique environment that needs to be managed carefully. Stakeholders and far-north Queenslanders generally are still digesting the details of the draft FNQ 2025 plan. I would like to make some observations about the process by which the draft FNQ 2025 plan was put together. I start with the Regional Plan Advisory Committee.

There are 18 individuals on that committee, including the Deputy Premier and four far-north Queensland Labor MPs. A large part of my electorate of Hinchinbrook is in the area covered by the FNQ 2025 plan. I was not invited to participate or to have any input. Future planning policy for far-north Queensland is not the sole preserve of government MPs.

The Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils has been prompted to express a number of concerns about how the document was drafted. On the face of it, local government has been engaged in the process, but these things are always a relative experience when you are dealing with this state Labor government. The FNQROC has expressed concern about the lack of detailed project planning in the draft FNQ 2025 plan, describing the way in which the draft plan was written as an 'on the run' approach. In respect of the advisory panels that considered various aspects of the draft plan, the FNQROC states that the formation and organisation of these panels were rushed and that tight time frames combined with poor administrative processes did not get the best value from panel members, causing a plethora of information to be circulated, much of it not version controlled.

The FNQROC also stated that information was circulated without enough time to review prior to discussing the issues involved, with new information often being delivered at meetings where those issues were to be discussed. The FNQROC, in support of its observation that the development of the draft plan was rushed, makes the observation that, in the month of June 2007 alone, 24 advisory panel meetings occurred—many of them for limited periods of time which restricted the capacity of panel participants from outside of the Cairns area to attend—and that meeting times often changed with little or no notification.

The area of the draft FNQ 2025 plan that affects my electorate is that part of my electorate in the new Cassowary Coast Regional Council. Just today, the new mayor of the Cassowary Coast Regional Council has raised concerns in relation to the draft plan in respect of rural residential developments, the future growth of commercial areas and the limited provision for urban growth. It will be important that interested stakeholders and individuals attend the public information sessions and make submissions to the state government to address some of these oversights and shortcomings. It is also important to note that not all major stakeholders involved in the development of the draft FNQ 2025 plan were completely happy with the way it was put together.

Time expired.

