

PLANNING — URBAN INFILL

Motion

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan) [4.18 pm]: That is a very difficult act to follow. I congratulate the member for Kimberley on the outstanding contribution she has made to this Parliament, and for her wonderful speech. That is a very hard act to follow, but I will need to follow it and move this motion. The motion is not worded in a harsh way, member for Cannington, but in a very productive and constructive way. The Minister for Planning, the nice one on the government side —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The opposition is backing the Minister for Planning for leadership. I move —

That this house calls on the Barnett government to implement a more strategic approach to planning our suburbs to regain public confidence in density and to ensure local communities are heard.

This motion is very productive and constructive. It reflects what is a very important issue for Western Australia's future, and in particular the future of our metropolitan area.

I will start with the issue of planning. Planning is an interesting portfolio. Planning in and of itself is an enabler of liveability. Western Australia has always had a high level of liveability and a high degree of amenity. That is one thing that we can all be proud of. Good planning is needed to ensure we continue to have a place where people want to live, recreate and work. A good planning system will ensure that we live in a clean environment, that we have good access to key services, including education and health, that we have places to recreate or play and that we can communicate with others. It ensures we can move in an easy way from suburb to suburb, from suburbs to the city and from suburbs to the country. That is what planning is all about. It is also about ensuring we have job creation throughout the metropolitan area and the regions. We need to ensure there are local jobs for people. To me, that is why good planning is so important. It is not an end in itself. It is an enabler of living in a good place with access to good services, to a clean environment and to good transport. That is why it is such an important part of a government portfolio. It is a very important part of what we do. It is one of the few areas in which I believe government has a lot of levers. When we talk about public policy across areas, planning is one area in which government has enormous power and enormous levers. It is a very important public policy tool in government.

Over the past 10 to 15 years we have seen a growing recognition that we need to be a bit smarter with our land. We need to try to ensure that we create vibrant and active places. This concept of place is very important. It is not only about building things; it is also about creating places and communities. I look back at some of the work undertaken by the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Alannah MacTiernan, who really ratcheted up the level of debate about this in the WA community. Many members may recall the Network City debate on the agenda at the time. Maybe a bit like Keating in his engagement with Asia, it was a bit too fast for a lot of people. There was a lot of reluctance. There was a lot of commentary and criticism at the time about the concept that everybody's backyard would be taken away by Alannah MacTiernan—that no-one would be able to play cricket in the driveway anymore. Network City gained a lot of criticism at the time. The concept was basic and it is something that has been carried on by this government. It was all about connecting suburbs and making sure there was a smart approach to density. We had the Network City debate. The government then introduced its "Directions 2031" policy. That did not have an ambitious target in relation to infill. I recall the Network City target was around 60 per cent; Directions 2031 dropped it to about 47 per cent. We all recognise that we need to be smarter with the land that we have and smarter with the suburbs that we have. That was Directions 2031.

As I have said in this place a number of times, we are not really arguing about the numbers anymore. Frankly, the numbers do not mean anything unless there is a strategy to achieve it. We are now arguing about the mechanism. I have been the shadow Minister for Planning for two years. What has really become apparent is that some measures introduced by this government have created a lot of hostility and rejection to density in our suburbs. That is what we do not want. The community has to be brought with us on this issue. The community has to be accepting of it because density cannot be forced on it. I do not think what occurred during the Network City debate was the then minister's fault; I think elements of the media and the Liberal Party were running the campaign against the concept of Network City. The government has to bring people with it. At the time of its announcement, some of the current government's policies and implications were probably not fully appreciated. As a result, we are seeing a lot of rejection in the community about some of the measures. I do not think that all the debate in the community can be discounted by the concept of nimbyism—not in my backyard. I do not think that is a way to explain it.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Eleni Evangel

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know the member for Churchlands is out there on this issue. I do not think he can explain it. It is interesting that the member for Churchlands is laughing about this issue given what is happening in his electorate.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: I was laughing at a comment made by the member for Wanneroo—not your speech.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay.

Ms L.L. Baker: He was outside!

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: He was just here. He went around.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Members, enough now! The member for West Swan has the call.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not think it can be discounted as nimbyism because the reality is there. When people are living in suburban streets and have three or four storeys—I have seen some of the plans—or even six-storey unit developments that basically front onto someone's backyard, the impact is real. It impacts not only on liveability but also on the ability to ever sell that property. Western Australians and Australians pour a lot of investment into their homes. That is why the home is such an important part of any debate. A lot of our financial worth is the home in which we live. Economists have done some comparisons about how we treat our homes compared with other people around the world. It is true that we put a lot of our wealth into our home. That is why issues affecting house value will always be a major issue in this country. The debate has moved on. We are not debating whether there should be density—I think we all accept that; we are debating how to implement it and where it should be.

I want to go through “Delivering Directions 2031: Report Card 2014” that was released last year. The government produces a report card each year. It has a lot of good information. I will touch initially upon the concept of liveability. Last year's Directions 2031 report card states —

Perth ranked eighth for liveability, a drop of five places from third in the 2011 survey. In the latest 2013 survey Perth's liveability ranking dropped another place from eighth to ninth place with a decrease of 0.1 points in the liveability score.

In the 2011 survey, Perth was third; in the 2013 survey, it was ninth. That was a major drop in liveability. My colleagues will be interested to know that compared with 2012, Perth performed worse in regards to having a good public transport service and having good schools and other educational facilities. Perth performed well in having a good climate, but I am not sure the government can claim credit for that.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: It will try!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He is God.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: It is all part of the Bigger Picture.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The good climate is part of the Bigger Picture!

Perth also performed well in having a wide range of recreational outdoor environments and having an attractive natural environment. A lot of governments can claim credit for the protection of our natural environment. Compared with other cities, Perth performs relatively poorly in terms of having a vibrant cultural entertainment scene and being an affordable place to live. That is an interesting analysis of livability. Another key point the report highlights, also about public transport, is that over the entire network passenger boardings declined by a total of 1 898 between 2013 and 2014. The negative growth could be attributed to a number of things, including a response to congestion on the public transport system or the lack of availability of station parking. Another interesting finding in a government report is that boardings were basically down. As I said, the issue of public transport is one of the key reasons that our livability decreased. As I said, a number of points are made by the “Directions 2031” report card. Another report released last year also acknowledged that infill targets were not being met. The target was about 47 per cent and we are running at about 25 per cent. The report also measured the performance of local governments in meeting infill targets, and I think that about two local governments are meeting their targets and a number of local governments are not. I will touch on that issue later because I think we need to be a bit more constructive in working with local governments to achieve these targets.

Before I move on to some of the policy measures we would like to raise today, including the development assessment panel process and the multi-unit code, I want to talk about some funding issues faced by the Western Australian Planning Commission and the Department of Planning. The feedback I get in a lot of instances from developers and the industry is that the WAPC has been hit by the budget crisis of the state government. Another sign of what happens when finances are not properly managed is that the budgets of some agencies are cut. Although Planning is a very important agency, the government will probably look at cutting it because it will not

get the same headlines as cuts to some service delivery agencies. I did a quick analysis of staffing at the WAPC and Planning, and the annual reports show that in 2011–12 there were 496 full-time equivalents at Planning and in 2013–14 that had dropped to 446, which is quite a significant drop in the number of employees. These issues are complex and we need an agency resource to be able to deal with them in a timely and effective manner. We did not discuss some of the budget constraints at this year's estimates committee process, but we did probably a couple of years ago, and I think the minister at the time acknowledged FTEs at the department had been cut, and that that continues to be a struggle. People continually put to me that areas dealing with complex policy matters such as development control policies are running very thin and are being staffed by two or three people, when really a greater volume of people is probably needed.

I will go to funding in councils. I truly believe that the growth councils struggle with some of the planning matters that are put forward. Council areas such as Swan, Wanneroo or Serpentine–Jarrahdale face massive growth and I sometimes question the resource allocation within the councils, particularly that of Swan—I cannot really make that judgement on the other two. When this massive growth is experienced and the same officer dealing with an extension of a pergola is trying to manage the creation of a new suburb, we probably need to be smarter in the way those resources are allocated to growth councils, whether the government steps in by providing more resources or the councils try to manage things in a different way. The growth councils are under enormous pressure to deliver necessary services and infrastructure to these growth areas.

Funding is one issue, and I want to touch on the metropolitan region improvement tax. As members know, that is a tax levied on the land tax bill in a metropolitan area, set up once the metropolitan region scheme was established to raise revenue to fund land acquisition and infrastructure improvements for areas earmarked under the MRS. That has been running for a number of years and in 2014–15 it is estimated to collect about \$80 million—I will have to check that—and it will grow next year. That is a significant amount of money. As a result of the budget mess of the state government, there have been caps on expenditure from the metropolitan region improvement tax. The estimated actual balance in the account at the end of June 2015, in a couple of weeks' time, is estimated to be \$237 million. In June 2008, that figure was \$8 million. As members can see, that is an accumulation of a tax collected by government because it has not been able to spend it when needed. It is important in theory, but it is really important on the ground. What is the impact of not spending that money? It means landowners who currently have land reserved under the MRS are not able to move on with their lives.

I will paint the example of people living in my electorate along Lord Street. As we know, Lord Street currently has an MRS reservation down the western side of it for the Perth–Darwin highway. That PDH route was changed about three or four years ago now, but there is still the MRS reservation. There is also reservation for a public transport corridor and continued uncertainty about the public transport corridor; this together with the fact that Tonkin Highway is now the preferred route for the PDH means people have massive uncertainty. They cannot sell land because who will buy it? No-one will buy land with a massive MRS reservation at the back of it. If they improve their houses or want to upgrade the bathrooms or basic parts of the house, they cannot do so because they will not be able to recover costs. They are basically stuck in no-man's land—no person's land—for a number of years.

Mr P. Papalia: Is that because of the Acting Speaker (Ms J.M. Freeman)?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I was a bit afraid! I was very afraid, but I think that is the appropriate way to say it!

Those people are stuck and are not able to move on with their lives. We see it again and again. It has also been put to me that basically the government will not voluntarily purchase the land until it is completely pushed or as part of a court proceeding. That is a real impact on landowners and on getting land now. It impacts the future cost of infrastructure provision, too, because the more we delay these purchases, the more it will cost us in future. It has an impact on a number of fronts. I have done the analysis, and it is one area in which I can honestly say there has been a deliberate policy not to spend money. I looked at the annual revenue versus expenditure. From 2001–02, under Labor, I calculated that about 110 per cent of revenue collected was spent on land acquisition; that is, we spent everything we got on land acquisition. This government is not quite at that; it is at about 45 per cent and it has probably dropped to about 40 per cent. It is a real issue that is creating problem after problem. Ultimately, the tax was there for a particular purpose. I understand budgetary considerations and constraints, but this tax is there for a particular purpose. It is hypothecated revenue and it should be spent on acquiring land for future infrastructure. Not doing so is just another cost being put on future generations, and it also impacts upon current landowners. I just want to make that point about the MRIT.

I move to particular problems in the community. As I said, I think there is legitimate concern out there about what is happening in some areas. We want infill to work. We want properly planned suburbs. That is what we want. We want to create more active places, but we cannot do that by simply letting the market decide. There has to be some structure in what we do. The government has a lot of tools at its disposal, but underfunding the Western Australian Planning Commission and a lack of coordination with infrastructure and transport have

really impacted the government's ability to implement precinct planning or place planning, which I will call "precinct planning". The concept of density that has been put to me is it is density where it deserves to be, not density everywhere. I also like the concept of choice in every suburb. That does not mean that every block has to have three units on it; it means nodal development and choice in a suburb. If people want a backyard, they can have that. I support people moving on with their lives through a changed family situation or getting older and wanting a smaller place and who want to continue to live in the same suburb, but I do not think that can be achieved by allowing every block to be subdivided.

I agree absolutely 100 per cent that if we disaggregate or subdivide all our blocks, creating proper precinct planning and proper density actually becomes harder. To get proper precinct planning there has to be an aggregation of land so there is some land for a proper precinct, some for public open space and some for proper infrastructure delivery to those nodes. I support the concept that we need to aggregate land in some cases, not disaggregate it. Simply letting councils subdivide land is not the smart way to go about planning for density. That is point one.

The "Delivering Directions 2031" report card looked at which councils were achieving their infill targets, and states —

Of the 32 local governments that have infill targets, two local government areas can be considered as 'ahead' of target ... 14 are currently 'tracking towards' the target ... and the remaining 16 can be considered in the 'early planning' phase ...

I recall one of the two councils that are achieving their infill targets is doing so as a result of government investment in the Claremont Quarter. I think that is probably one of the examples. When the state government is involved, councils are more able to achieve their targets and when the government is not involved, they are less likely to. I do not think allowing wholesale subdivision is the correct way to achieve density. Everyone has a different view of what density is. Some people think that density means 20-storey towers and others that it is battleaxe blocks. My view of density infill is that it is more about building European-style three or four-storey apartment blocks. That is my idea of where we should be going on density and how it should be applied to precincts.

Letting councils go ahead without proper structure and frameworks is a real problem. I will insert at this point the lack of coordination with infrastructure. WA Labor had the planning and infrastructure portfolios together. It was a massive portfolio, and some people criticised it at the time, but it allowed for the introduction of transport-oriented developments. A lot of the successful cases being put forward by this government, particularly in Cockburn, are the result of the construction of the Mandurah rail line and the planning that went on around that. The nexus between planning and infrastructure and planning and transport are very important. I will go through some of the problems this government has experienced with planning. I do not blame my friend the Minister for Planning. I am sure that he would have liked to have some stability in the transport portfolio over the past seven years and a draft plan that actually works.

Dr A.D. Buti: Maybe a Minister for Transport is the only solution.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, that is the only solution.

I do not blame the Minister for Planning for this one, because I think he would have liked to have a consistent and coherent transport plan to work with over the past seven years, or even a consistent and coherent Minister for Transport to work with over those seven years. That has been a major failure of this government. When we look back on the Barnett government, the lack of a proper public transport plan and as a result the inability for planning to really work towards a plan has been a major problem. Let us face it, the only way to really get precinct planning is to develop it around public transport nodes, and that has been entirely missing. The only way to engage with developers to get the density we are talking about is to provide some value to them. That value is often through rail or light rail. In the absence of that, government cannot really engage with developers in the manner it wants to get the density outcomes it wants. This is a major problem.

Again, the Metro Area Express light rail is an example of this problem. When it was put forward in, I think, December 2012, comments were made about where people should buy land, and I think some people bought land along the route on the expectation that the rail line would be built. A lot of studies have been done about the value that rail brings to suburbs. It is quite interesting to compare rail with bus routes. A lot of people say that bus routes appear to give a similar result to rail, but bus routes do not add value to the property around them, because they can be moved, whereas rail tracks cannot be moved. As soon as tracks are laid, value is added to the land that surrounds them because it is permanent infrastructure that improves the value of the land.

Mr D.J. Kelly: That is exactly right, member for West Swan. I don't know why people don't understand that.

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thank the member. I think he is serious.

Mr D.J. Kelly: I am. It is so clear, but the government doesn't get that.

Mrs G.J. Godfrey interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Do not be like that, member for Belmont. I do not like it when the member is unhappy with us.

The key issue is that anyone engaged with the development industry knows that the only way to capture value around these transport projects is through rail. There is no doubt that a rapid bus system can move people, but what can it bring to the planning and development around it? The value that rail brings is far greater than that which bus routes can bring. That is the conclusion of all the studies.

Without permanent plans for the Department of Planning to work with, it has been really hard to get sensible planning outcomes or a plan to help develop and achieve those density targets. The 2031 density targets are very ambitious and the government has not got anywhere near them. I think one of the reasons for that—do not blame my friend the Minister for Planning—is the lack of real plans for coherency —

Mr P. Papalia: Coherence.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Coherence.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Cohesiveness.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know the member for South Perth is not very cohesive at the moment. I thank him for that.

Mr J.E. McGrath: I was a journalist.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: But the member was a sports journo.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, that was not a slur on sports journalists. Some of my best friends are sports journalists!

The transport issue has been a major inhibitor of proper planning to provide good density. I think that the Minister for Planning, in his quiet times when he reflects on this, would have to agree with that. He would have to agree that we need a funded, coherent long-term proper plan for public transport.

Mr J.H.D. Day: We need a good public transport plan. Yes, that is correct. But I do not think that is the reason for the figure for infill achieved, which is higher and probably much closer to 30 per cent than the figure on that page. It is always a couple of years behind, so it is probably higher than what the member mentioned.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay; I look forward to the Minister for Planning's contribution.

I turn to development assessment panels, which are very, very controversial. As I said, they are currently being reviewed by an upper house inquiry, and I look forward to reading the outcomes of that review. DAPs are creating major concerns in communities that feel as though they do not have a voice. I think, again, that one of the reasons for the kickback or resistance to density is that people believe they are not involved at all in the process. The changes announced and put into place on 1 May reduced the threshold for voluntary inclusion to \$2 million, which nowadays, as we know, is a lot of development. I have quickly looked at the annual report to try to understand a little how DAPs have worked in the community. I will go through some of the key statistics from the annual report. In 2013–14, the Metropolitan Central Joint Development Assessment Panel received 43 form 1 applications, of which it approved 32 and 18 were still current at the time of the report. Metro east received 20; 14 were approved and only one was refused. Thirty-eight were received in the north west; 24 were approved and only five were refused. In metro west, 34 were received, 25 were approved and five were refused. We can see that there was quite a high success rate in getting approvals under the JDAP process.

As we know, the development industry has supported DAPs and JDAPs. I know the concept has been around for a number of years—I acknowledge that—but I think maybe the application has been a bit wider than was originally envisaged. I want to outline that the Urban Development Institute of Australia supports JDAPs, of course. Its submission to the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review concluded —

UDIA is strongly supportive of the operation of Development Assessment Panels and we welcome the opportunity to provide further comment or clarification of the content of this submission if required.

It makes the point —

... DAPs are not the panacea for all of the problems in the approval system and indeed, some local government performance may exceed those of a DAP.

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We had a bit of a discussion last week in relation to this issue: DAPs, to me, do not equal density. I do not think it can be said that those against DAPs are against density; I do not think that would be a balanced statement to make. I think the minister would say that DAPs are needed to help with the density issue, but, as I have said, many of the outcomes are creating resistance on a number of levels from the community and then through councils. Unless the minister wants to take all the planning power from councils, he is basically creating the momentum —

Mr J.H.D. Day: A few people have suggested that.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister is in government.

Mr J.H.D. Day: It's not what we're proposing, I must say. Local governments have an important role to play, and the majority are quite constructive and collaborative, but not all.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes. Most of the ones that are not are the ones the government's members represent!

Mrs G.J. Godfrey: Not Belmont.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know, member for Belmont. People always talk about how good Belmont was with its proactive policy in relation to infill.

Mrs G.J. Godfrey: Thank you.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is often said that Belmont is a good example.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Enough now.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to DAPs, what is basically being created is a momentum against density, because people are now equating DAPs to density and they do not like it. They do not like the lack of consultation; they do not like that the people they elected through council are removed from the process really. Let us face it; basically, they do not have a voice.

Mr J.H.D. Day: They're not exactly the same issues, and DAPs have not just been established in relation to dealing with density issues; there are other justifications as well. People mix up the two. They are related, but they are not actually the same issue.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know. I totally agree that they are related and they are not the same, but what is happening is that the community is equating the two. People are now equating DAPs to density and hate density because of the DAPs; I think it is a real problem.

As I said, people talk about nimby and things like that, but this is where people live. The reality is that we can do better. I think a lot of people are really irritated when they sit on the train on some of these train lines in some of these older areas—say, Albany Highway, member for Gosnells—and they see the neglected areas. As I say, it is low-hanging fruit. Really good developments, supported by the community, could bring the density and help with housing choice and housing affordability; that is where we should be starting.

Mr J.E. McGrath: We agree.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thank the member for South Perth.

Mr J.H.D. Day: There is validity to what you are saying, but the point is that it is not quite as easily done as you are indicating in a lot of cases.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I acknowledge that planning is very difficult because of, in particular, private landowners. Let us face it; if it was all government owned, the government could do whatever it wanted—but, of course, there are private landowners with the complexity of ownership. If the government started with the government-owned land along transport routes, it could probably be doing a lot more.

I do not want to get too highly political in this because I think it is going to be a very good debate and a lot of people want to contribute to it.

A member interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not get highly political, as the member for Maylands knows!

I think one of the problems is the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority's focus on some of these big projects. That is fair enough, but it is not able to do what is needed along some of these other routes. I think that is the key point. As I have said, having three major city projects at the same time means that other projects cannot be prioritised, and that is basically an outcome. The government can stand and say that those projects are a priority, and it is welcome to do that, but I am saying that having three capital city projects all trying to achieve the same

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thing at the time of a really weak commercial market not only makes bad financial sense, but also does not make good planning sense. The government really could be doing a little more out there in the suburbs. I think that is a valid criticism.

As I said, when people are living in their single-residential home and they have these apartments being built next to them, what are they doing? If they try to sell, their house is devalued quite a bit; I know that for a fact. What can they do, particularly when, in some instances, they cannot achieve the same outcomes or get the same value for their property? There are tonnes of areas in Perth with government-owned land or land owned by government departments and council-owned land, and private developers that are basically land-banking and places are becoming a target for antisocial behaviour and other issues. I went out to the member for Gosnells' electorate last year, and that is something we do not want to happen in that beautiful part of Perth that has great proximity to public transport, public open space, schools and the central business district. That area has a number of qualities, and I know the government is starting to work on it. But, again, it probably needed a bit more government funding and infrastructure to start off with.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Member, you can't build a multistorey building alongside single-storey residences unless the local government authority has made an amendment to its town planning scheme to allow greater height.

Dr A.D. Buti: There is a 29-storey building going into South Perth.

Mr J.E. McGrath: The City of South Perth made an amendment to its town planning scheme to allow a variation above the 14 storeys or whatever if it passes 10 points. I am saying that local governments are responsible for designating the areas.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: New measures provide that unless a town planning scheme specifically says that multi-unit developments cannot be built, they are allowed to be built.

Mr J.E. McGrath: I would think most councils would have specific rules.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Not really—because it was not prepared for it.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Can you give me an example of a high-rise building, please?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There is a proposal for a six-storey building on Charles Street.

Mr J.E. McGrath: How tall?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Six storeys.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Six storeys—gee, that's a skyscraper!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member can laugh about six storeys.

Mr J.E. McGrath: We have 29 storeys in South Perth.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know that block; it does not overlook anyone's backyard. The member might scoff at six storeys, but when it overlooks someone's backyard six metres away, that is a big issue.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Fair enough.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: When 100 people can move into an area and look into people's backyards, it is an issue for those people. I am saying that I am not anti six-storey developments, but I am anti the lack of proper public open space and other amenity that comes with it. I will talk about that in a minute.

The last point I want to talk about is the multi-unit code. The R-codes are under review, so maybe the minister can give us a further update. I thought he said that something was coming to his office this week.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I think I said in the estimates committee last week that it has been very actively discussed in my office in the last couple of weeks. That is occurring.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I said, this sort of ties in but it is a bit different. Even the minister and the director general last week acknowledged that the multi-unit changes were probably taken up by the developers with a bit more gusto than they thought they would be. As a result, we are seeing some of these outcomes. Members on my side come to me weekly giving me specific examples. The member for Midland raised an issue about someone in her electorate, the member for Maylands brought a group to see me last week and the member for Mirrabooka and

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the member for Gosnells have raised planning issues. I met with some members of the Mount Hawthorn Action Group and members about some issues in Wembley. A number of issues are being raised about this. As I said, we are creating resistance to something that should be a good thing—and that is better use of land.

The minister said that planning is not as easy as I am saying it is, but, as I said, I do not disagree; it is a complex area, but what is the way forward? The way forward is precinct planning, not individual block planning. Member for South Perth, let us focus on six-storeys. Let us assume there is no single residential living there at the moment. In isolation, it might be okay, but what will happen when a six or seven-storey building is built right next door. There are examples in Melbourne where two balconies on high-rise apartments are within two metres of each other. That is not really what we want.

Mr J.H.D. Day: That's in Melbourne, not Perth.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes. People will embrace density when it does not reduce amenity and when it comes with public open space, a cafe, shopping lifestyle and transport. They are the three key requirements that we should be aware of when we are planning. We must look at not only the single block, but also the precinct and the node we are creating because, ultimately, it will prosper as a place only if the liveability and the amenity are there. That is what we need to be better at. I believe changes must be made to our system so that we look more at the precinct in which we operate and not look only at the block. Making individual decisions over 20 years may lead to really bad outcomes for the community, so looking at the entire precinct is far more important—in other words, the whole idea of precinct planning rather than block planning.

Infrastructure is the other key; it is very important to get this right. We talk about costs, and there is always a trade-off from a policy perspective. What constraints do we put on developers; what impact does it have on apartment costs and what are all the other implications? I refer to transport infrastructure for a second. Car bays are a major cost in building apartments. A good public transport network, whether it be light rail or heavy rail, will reduce the requirement for car bays and, therefore, reduce some of the costs. It also might provide a better public open space outcome. If the infrastructure is built, the public open space might occur and, of course, the associated cafe environment. Infrastructure is very important, whether it be six-storey developments, inner-city developments or suburban development, such as Ellenbrook and developments in the northern corridor. We can talk about the merits of the Ellenbrook railway line, and I will focus on that a little. An Ellenbrook rail line would deliver a better planning outcome, particularly along the Lord Street growth corridor. Building is occurring in the absence of any plan for public transport improvements. People do not know where the buses are. There are no buses in the new suburbs; they still go only to Lord Street and do not enter any other suburbs.

Mr J.H.D. Day: There is a frequent bus service to Ellenbrook.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am talking about Brabham and St Leonards—two massive housing estates with no new bus services entering them.

Mr D.J. Kelly: What about buses on the weekend? They are almost non-existent.

Mr J.H.D. Day: In Ellenbrook—are you sure?

Mr D.J. Kelly: Yes.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am talking about brand-new suburbs such as Brabham, St Leonards and Dayton. There are no bus services entering them. There is a stick in the ground for a bus stop and no shelters and no seats. How are we planning those suburbs? People who buy out there do not know where the bus route will be. That does not lead to the best outcome for the community. Infrastructure and transport certainty are very key parts in getting good outcomes. I know a review is being done of developer contribution plans. It was a good reform, but, like all these things, the concept is okay, but the application is questionable. There were some delays in approving the developer contribution plans. What is included in the developer contribution plans? As I said, in some of the new suburbs, developer contributions are \$30 000 per block, which is a huge impost, particularly when it targets people buying their first home. The criticism put to me is that the Western Australian Planning Commission is struggling with workload to oversee them.

I do not want to go through every issue because that is what my colleagues are here for, but concerning East Street in Mt Hawthorn, there are questions about the role of the Department of Housing being the developer and the approver.

Mr J.H.D. Day: It has delegated authority from the Planning Commission, as is well-established practice. But the final outcome has been very much in consultation with the Department of Planning, and the project's go-ahead would have had approval from the Planning Commission, as I understand it. Changes were made to what was originally proposed.

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Again, it is creating a lot of community unrest, as is the fact that the developer is the approver. I know what the minister is talking about when he says “delegated authority”.

My colleague the member for Maylands has been working with groups about what is happening in their suburban streets. There are issues in the electorates of the members for Bateman and Churchlands. There is also the need for better infrastructure in the electorates of the members for Mirrabooka and Gosnells. As I said, it is not an easy policy area, but I believe that we need to be far smarter about what we are doing. There is too much focus on some special projects and not enough focus on creating more strategic and better planning for our suburbs.

Mr J.H.D. Day: I think you are trying to promise all things to all people. There is a lot happening out of the Perth CBD as well, including through government projects. I can mention some of those. It is easy to identify all the gripes that have been raised in recent times. I understand people’s concerns and I will comment on those but there is an attitude that these things need to be dealt with, but just not near them.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister might stand up and talk about some LandCorp projects but they are not really giving us the amenities that we want. They are not providing public open spaces or recreational spaces, and there is normally no improved public transport that goes with it. I saw a press release today about a new way of living in White Gum Valley. Jeez—that is not really a new way of living!

Mr J.H.D. Day: It is a popular area. White Gum Valley is not a cheap area anymore.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No. It is a great area. All I am saying is that I think —

Mr J.H.D. Day: It is close to Fremantle and close to the city.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I love White Gum Valley. The member for Victoria Park’s in-laws live in White Gum Valley. Some of my best friends live in White Gum Valley. However, planning for it needs to be better coordinated.

The minister would say that he is doing bits and pieces and working on some ex-government land here and there and some LandCorp developments, which, as I said, I do not think achieve the liveability outcomes that we are searching for. We need to invest in our current public transport system and transport routes around parks and around businesses.

I will make a point about small businesses. One of the key ways to support small businesses is to bring customers to their doors through proper density planning or proper infill. In my very simplistic approach —

Mr D.J. Kelly: Humble opinion.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In my humble opinion, talking about shopping centres versus small businesses, once someone gets in the car, they are probably lost to the shopping centre. If they were going to get in the car, they would probably go to the shopping centre where, let us face it, there is more range and it is possibly cheaper—maybe not. Small businesses that have a good catchment, particularly for walkability—if people can walk to the small business—will thrive and succeed because people can go there and support that small business. Once people get in the car and drive to the shopping centre, they might not be supporting small businesses that need support. There is a real need and a hunger for that.

I will also talk about infill and block sizes. It is a problem that some of the block sizes in our new suburbs in the outer fringe are much smaller than some of the block sizes in the inner to medium suburbs. Whether we call that density, there are more people in smaller blocks with less public open space in the outer fringe than there are in the inner to medium suburbs. I have talked a little bit about amenities, small businesses and transport. I also want to talk about public open space. I think we really need to ensure that when we create infill, we also have a plan for greenery and public open space where people can enjoy the outdoors. People talk about how no-one uses mini-parks or parks in suburban streets. Sometimes, it does not need to be used all the time to fulfil a purpose; that may be shade or reducing the heat of a suburb. It can be a number of things. The concept that something has to be used all the time to fulfil a particular reason for being is not technically correct, especially in the planning sphere. Again, it is something that we need to do.

As I said, the Labor Party has always supported a strong infill or density program. We understand that we have to be a lot smarter with the resources that we have, and one of the key commodities that we have is land. It is one of the most costly things that we have, but it is land. We cannot have the community fighting density and infill development because of the misapplication or unintended consequences of policies. That is what is happening. I think the Minister for Planning wants density and infill to succeed and I think the Department of Planning does too. However, I think they have been stretched and that some of the policies the department has put in place have had unintended consequences. Without rectification or another tool—whether it is using a different agency or

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looking at some of the agencies that we have—and without changing what we do, we are not getting the outcome and the liveability that we need. Public transport is key and public open spaces are key. Good, local decisions, which basically encourage choice in our suburbs but do not allow the wholesale disaggregation of blocks on suburban streets, is the way to go. Thank you.

Ms L.L. BAKER: Mr Speaker.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Mr Speaker. I am happy for the member for Maylands to go first if I can go after her.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz): Member for Maylands.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [5.16 pm]: Thank you for looking my way, Mr Acting Speaker. I must have spoken a bit louder and you were not expecting the minister to be on his feet, I suspect. The member for South Perth should not go anywhere because I am going to speak about something that is happening in his electorate. I am joking; he can go if he wants to. I am going to talk about the Dan Murphy situation.

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I thought it was an appropriate time to bring it up and to perhaps let the house know some strategies that the community is coming up with in order to deal with this. That will be a little later in what I wanted to say. I want to focus my presentation on issues of a specific nature, which are the things that are happening in the electorate of Maylands. I know that the minister is aware of some of these issues. The Maylands council and the Stirling council—of course, because I have both councils in my electorate —

Mr J.H.D. Day: Bayswater.

Ms L.L. BAKER: Bayswater and Stirling; what did I say?

Mr J.H.D. Day: You said Maylands.

Ms L.L. BAKER: Both those councils have had different approaches to planning with the community. I would like to put on the record that I have been very impressed with the City of Stirling's approach to looking at the precinct plan for Inglewood that the council started about 18 months ago. It started the process with quite a bit of advertising and letterboxing, and publicising to the whole of the Inglewood precinct, particularly the retail area, about the council looking at the future development of this area. It is the next suburb out from Mt Lawley, so it makes complete sense that this area needs to be looked at. The council has been looking at zoning on Beaufort Street, particularly to attract high-quality and higher density developments. I think that is completely appropriate for a main road. Some of the challenges that have come up as that has started to be realised is developers coming in with plans that, although the plans look fabulous, quite often do not have the green component—the tree canopy component—or, indeed, any relationship to the buildings' environmental aspects. I get a bit sad because I have seen some remarkably progressive, sustainable buildings that have been built—I am thinking of Money Street, Northbridge, where the shadow Minister for Environment and myself were privileged to have a look at the most amazing apartment block where they are almost looking at living off the grid soon.

It has the most remarkable water recycling system, using grey water, heating systems and conservation principles. The whole building has been designed with aspects and amenities that mean it is a really low-cost building to live in. It is a very modern building to live in and very funky. It is a great building and it is also very sustainable. It was not hugely expensive to build. If those things were possible 10 years ago—I think this building was started about eight years ago and completed about six years ago—it is a bit sad to see the developments going to local government for approval now. Sometimes we look at them and think, “Ho-hum.” It is more of the same—a square box, which might have some coloured panels here and there and attempts to have the windows facing the right way or louvres. It is almost paying lip-service.

Ultimately, the practicality of this world that we live in is that many developers are interested in how many apartments they can fit onto a block, not on how sustainable, beautiful or long term those buildings are for the people who buy them or live in them. We have seen a bit of that happening around Inglewood and I think we will see a bit of it happening in Maylands too in the not-too-distant future. There has been an eruption of these proposals. The most recent one was nine storeys high on Beaufort Street. I think it has been knocked back for the time being. It has been discussed again in talks between the proponent and the council. I have no problem with that kind of development; it is sensible and it works well. For all of us who doorknock, I am also very happy with the infill that is happening around the California bungalows throughout Bayswater, Maylands, Inglewood and Bedford. They are all very positive.

I want to talk about a couple of specific issues. One of them is the lived experience of my constituents in trying to navigate through this new system that the minister brought in called the development assessment panel process. It is the complete antithesis of community planning or involvement for community and planning. The starkest reality for my community is the realisation that it elects local councillors who have practically no

ultimate say in what goes on in their neighbourhoods anymore. That is a sad day. It makes us start to wonder why we have local government at all. My understanding was that the DAPs could have had a very clear and productive role in helping to stimulate appropriate development and to get it right for the state. I repeatedly see what my constituents see as an abuse of the system and something that is highly undemocratic for them. They question why they should bother electing local representatives when they have no say in what is happening next door. A lot of people in my community know what to do when something is going on that they do not like. They phone their local council and find out who their ward councillors are. They get the information from me because I am down the road or because they know who I am. I tell them who their ward councillor is and suggest that they go and lobby them. Off they go, tally-ho; that is the way we do these things. They are really comfortable with that. The ward councillor is a local person; somebody they know. Whether they trust them is irrelevant, but they know that the person lives in the area and will sit down with them and understand the context in which they are seeking further information about a particular development.

One of the things that we have lost with these DAPs—I ask the minister to seriously consider how this can be fixed—is that connection to community. The community is feeling more and more disenfranchised from planning processes and more and more alienated. I do not think the minister meant to do that. I do not think that was the minister's vision for this process. My reality of dealing with the many people who come to me is exactly that—they are in despair. I know of a lady who has been hospitalised because she was so stressed by attempting to represent herself and her neighbours at a DAP hearing. I will read some of the things that happened to her and to the group of neighbours. It relates to a development in Kennedy Street in Maylands, just near my office. The area I am talking about has great big roads lined with jacaranda trees and with bungalows down either side. It is a real heritage area; the north Maylands historical construction area. It is a beautiful part of my electorate. Just at the back of this area, on a rise which gives a bit more of a view of Perth, is a block that a young couple, I think, want to develop. It is a grand idea to develop it. The problem is about what they have put up for development. It is basically a post-modern building with three or four apartments on the top of a little hill in the middle of this really lovely heritage suburb. The community paid to have a model of it constructed so that people could physically see what was coming. Sometimes if we do not have that kind of mental process, we do not see things as well unless they are in three dimensions. Community members paid for this model to be built out of their own pockets. I quite like post-modernist architecture—I do not have a problem with it really—but it just did not fit right next to a whole bunch of California bungalows and jacarandas and wide streets.

The couple went to the City of Bayswater, which unanimously refused the proposal at its council meeting on 22 July 2014. The proponents then took it to the development assessment panel meeting the following month on 25 August. I will tell members what the council said was wrong with it. The council said that it contravenes 16 of the R-codes. I think that is a fairly substantial number of R-codes to contravene. It said that it would put an unacceptable strain on ageing infrastructure. The sewerage system in that part of my electorate was built in 1937, so it is just a bit younger than the member for Morley, I think! Stormwater drains in the area also have quite a low capacity. It is old infrastructure. The council's view was that this drain was unacceptable. In addition, the bulk of the building's limited compliance with what are referred to as the north Maylands character protection area design guidelines was wrong. It was excessively high and it just did not fit. Anyone could see that when they saw the model. The JDAP passed the proposal when it saw it.

Mr J.H.D. Day: How did the two councillors who were on the DAP vote, do you know?

Ms L.L. BAKER: I will tell the minister in a minute as I go through my notes. The residents who were present at the joint development assessment panel meeting cited the following concerns about the decision that was passed and the failure of the JDAP chair to conduct the meeting in what they thought was a professional manner and in conformity with proper process. The R100 compatible application did not conform to the R40 zoning of the site and the JDAP failed to impose conditions or compromises to rectify that disparity, which means that the development will tower over nearby residences and set a precedent for other such scaled buildings in what is a quiet residential street. I am happy to take the minister to have a look at it. The development application included government-owned land. This next bit is a classic; I thought they were joking when they told me this. This property will go from border to border with no setbacks. There is absolutely no green canopy anywhere on the property. There is no green on the block! To make up for that, the developer included the council's road verge, which is covered in woodchips with a little banksia growing in the middle of it that is about one-metre high and struggling for existence, and the trees on the next-door neighbour's property to allow them to comply with shade and appropriate tree canopy requirements. I seriously thought they were joking! This is what the minister's joint development assessment panel has approved, and it has failed to impose any condition to rectify those requirements, despite the precedent again that it will set for future planning.

The proposed development will also include the demolition of a 93-year-old home with architectural features of its era within the culturally significant north Maylands character protection area. The JDAP failed to impose

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conditions to rectify the destruction of a character building, as well as the proposed development's failure to adhere to local government design guidelines. There are zoning laws and planning laws, and the minister and I both know—all of us know—that it takes a council years to put in place a planning scheme. When I was involved in the Shire of Mundaring's review and creation of its new planning code, it took two years. It is not a quick process. The community is looking at these decisions and the input and it is wondering about the value of local government and of having zoning laws and planning requirements. No justification was given at the meeting or in the minutes for the above concerns. I can go on about the alleged personal behaviour. Panel members said that bias was shown towards the applicant, and this again is probably poor judgement on behalf of the panel. I might be accused of greeting someone I know, but in this sensitive environment it is best that the panel members do not greet the developer personally by name and give them a pat on the back and have a chat before the process starts. It is really not helpful or appropriate. Panel members claimed that they were abused verbally when they tried to respond to questions they had been given about the building model they supplied. Panel members also dismissed residents' concerns as being nebulous when asked about the sewerage, which I mentioned earlier—"They are nebulous concerns; don't want to be bothered with that." That is one instance.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: The other issue I want to turn to is a battle that I have been fighting for six years. The first battle I won was against the Coles Group building a liquor store on Guildford Road at the Cascades Tavern site. The Liquor Commission turned down that development application. Another proposal has been submitted by Woolworths for a Dan Murphy's development. Sometime I would like to talk about the planning issues around these liquor stores being put close to residential areas, but firstly, just to separate two things, I will talk about the member for South Perth's issues with the Dan Murphy's development there. I hope he does not mind. I spoke to Ashley Cranenburgh and gained permission, so with that I will proceed down the path that his action group has been through. Indeed, the member for South Perth could also stand in this place and recite this because he has been supportive of his community as they have fought against this development. Basically, Woolies is trying to get approval for a large destination outlet in Como on the highway?

Mr J.E. McGrath: Down the side of the Como Hotel.

Ms L.L. BAKER: That is right. It is on the site of the Como Hotel. I want to talk about this because it demonstrates absolutely clearly the costs to the community. If any member has ever worked on one of these campaigns with their community, they will know the cost. I estimated that to fight the liquor store in the Coles exercise cost my office in real terms about \$50 000. We fought that case for 18 months to nearly two years, and that cost went into staff time, photocopying, being out on the road, producing campaign information for residents, working with residents, and going to JDAP and Liquor Commission hearings. Therefore, \$50 000 of electorate money went into helping these residents. We won that case. The community action group in South Perth might have a slightly different socioeconomic profile from my electorate, member for South Perth, because it has spent \$100 000.

Mr J.E. McGrath: I didn't have to do photocopying for them, so I saved some money.

Ms L.L. BAKER: It is not paid for by the member personally. The Save Como Action Group has estimated that as a group of people trying to fight a major multinational organisation, it has spent \$100 000 of its own money on legal fees and the like. I want to read to members some of the issues that this group ran into when they took up this fight. Members must remember that the City of South Perth is fully onside in opposing this development, as are all the residents, as is Main Roads Western Australia, and as are the state and federal members of Parliament—but JDAP approved it. I will mention some concerns that that group brought to light. Again, I will read a little from the information it has given me. In light of the recent decision approving the development after two previous JDAP hearings—where it was rejected—the Save Como Action Group committee members raised a number of issues. The email reads —

How can the JDAP approve development applications where the Council, City officers, thousands of residents, state M.P's, federal M.P's, Main Roads WA, expert traffic engineers & planners all strongly oppose the development?

Is it —

... sound planning to have 3 out of 5 JDAP members approving it contrary to all evidence ...

Why does the applicant have the right of appeal (numerous times) however the City or the community doesn't unless they find a —

Truckload —

... of cash to take the matter to the Supreme court ...

It appears as though it is sacrosanct to take applications matters to the S.A.T. The applicant has grounds for appeal & several bites at the cherry through more JDAP rehearings so it paves the way for an inevitable approval. This only makes a mockery of the system where there is no equitable decision making present ...

How & why can JDAP members ignore expert traffic reports (suggesting significant amenity loss) & say that this is not enough to prevent an approval of an application. Shouldn't they be responsible enough not to dismiss this critical criteria —

Around traffic —

& ... then voice an obvious bias towards the applicant (This was said by a recent panel in the Dan Murphy's hearing at the Como hotel site recently on the 17th April 2015);

When City officers recommend refusal in their responsible authority report, why are they in almost all cases ignored & subsequently overturned by the JDAP members (generally the 3 out of 5 "external panel members" —

Not the council members —

whom have little regard & knowledge of the local community's they are making decisions over ...

That is what hurts.

In relation to the member for South Perth's case, I also put on record some concerns raised by Steve Irons, the federal member for Swan. In a letter, he stated —

I believe concerns raised by the City, the Save Como Action Group ... and the wider Como community have not been adequately addressed following the JDAP hearings ...

He referred to both joint development assessment panel hearings. Under the heading "Non-compliance with the City of South Perth's Town Planning Scheme", he refers to this needing to be rejected. That is a bit of a surprise—JDAP not paying any attention to the local planning scheme!

Mr J.H.D. Day: It cannot do that. If it did, it would be acting unlawfully.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I am reading from a letter written by Steve Irons.

Mr J.E. McGrath: The planning scheme was changed later.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I will again quote Mr Irons —

As I have previously highlighted, the application does not comply with the City of South Perth's Town Planning Scheme No. 7.5 (i) and (p) which outlines the need for all development applications to adequately preserve the amenity of a locality and to prevent any social issues that may affect it.

He then raises community opposition to the booze barn liquor outlet —

There is also no case for an additional liquor store in the area ...

We know the arguments around that; I will not continue with that. The car parking shortfall is an issue. He states —

A parking requirement of 101 spaces does not adequately meet the requirements outlined under this scheme, nor does it take into account the reasonable projected increase ...

Finally, he refers to road safety due to the placement of slip-roads and other access and egress to the site. I want to put that on the record because it is pretty clear that this is not a partisan issue. These problems are coming up in all our electorates. I speak to my colleagues on both sides of the house and they indicate to me that they also have some concerns about this. I do not think the government started out to put in place such an unruly system that is causing so much grief in communities.

In relation to the liquor store particularly, before I sit down I want to tell members about the possibility of introducing an amendment to local government town planning schemes that may help them to prevent this from happening. The City of Subiaco, the Town of Victoria Park and the City of South Perth—not JDAPs—prevented liquor stores from happening. Those three local governments have amended their town planning schemes to promote and manage community and economic development and at the same time safeguard the attractiveness, amenity and character of localities. The objectives of this policy are to offer a balanced and diverse range of facilities and services, and contribute to a sense of amenity and vitality; accommodate licensed premises throughout the commercial districts of the city, in particular the town centre; to ensure that the type and scale of venue is suitable for the location having regard to the zone; and to minimise the impact of licensed premises on the amenity of the subject and adjoining localities. Anyone who is interested in this issue can contact the City of

Subiaco, the Town of Victoria Park or the City of South Perth. The City of Bayswater is discussing a similar motion at its next meeting in a week. We are trying to stop the problems that are occurring through these big destination liquor stores being railroaded through. Big multinational corporations are using their money and power to buy off appearances at hearings, to get through the JDAP, to get access to Liquor Commission hearings, and to build structures that are not at all appropriate. That is on the liquor side of things—the big destination liquor outlets.

I started my presentation speaking specifically about the failures in the JDAP system at the moment. They might be delivering developments and they might be doing some of the things that the government wanted JDAPs to do—such as, I assume, to streamline processes, to get things approved, to get stuff out there—but some of the building decisions being churned out by the sausage factory are not something that I want to live next to. It is not something that the government should support. There needs to be some rethinking about this. There needs to be some reworking about the way JDAPs make decisions. Somewhere in the government's heart there must be a way not to lose the community in this issue. It is fast heading down the line of losing community faith in not just the JDAPs but also the state government's ability to deliver smart, appropriate community solutions for developments in all electorates.

MR J.H.D. DAY (Kalamunda — Minister for Planning) [5.44 pm]: I welcome the fact these issues are being raised and debated. They are important for Perth and for Western Australia, given the population growth issues and other demographic changes the state is facing. I welcome the opportunity to make some comments. The two key issues that have been raised really relate to multi-unit developments and also the role of development assessment panels, otherwise known as DAPs. I will comment on both of those aspects before I conclude. I do not expect to take the whole 60 minutes because I know that other members want to speak.

First of all, I will provide some background comments to refer to the context in which we have to consider these issues in Western Australia, and in the Perth metropolitan area in particular. Western Australia has a significantly growing population. I think that Western Australia still has the highest population growth rate in the country. It has certainly lessened off in the last two years or so, but until two or three years ago, with the economic expansion and the major construction projects happening in the resources sector and so on, our population growth rate was certainly well above the national average. In terms of numbers, Perth currently has a population of about two million people. Over the next three to four decades, by about 2050, we expect that population to increase to about 3.5 million—almost doubling. That is obviously an increase of 1.5 million people. For that number of people, we will need an additional 800 000 new homes. The government's policy position is highlighted through Directions 2031 and the more recent and more detailed planning documentation entitled “Perth and Peel@3.5million”, which is a suite of documents that includes four draft subregional planning frameworks for the Perth metropolitan and Peel region. They exist under the overall umbrella of Directions 2031. Through those planning frameworks and Directions 2031, the government expects about 47 per cent of new dwellings will be delivered in existing localities—in other words, through urban infill projects. As the member for West Swan intimated, that is a significant proportionate increase from the current level, which I suspect is around 30 per cent, being provided through urban infill projects. We need to increase the density of residential development, particularly within a radius of about 10 to 15 kilometres of the Perth CBD. I will come back to the rationale for that in a moment. That does not mean to say that the density of everywhere within that part of the metropolitan area needs to be increased; it needs to be done in an appropriate manner in suitable locations. But it does need to happen. People need to accept that changes are going to occur. Some reactions—some have been reflected through comments made here today and through some of the other media comments in recent times—are to some of the significant changes we are seeing.

I recall some comments on radio a few months ago by Bernard Salt, a prominent Australian demographer and commentator on these issues. He said that just about everybody in Perth recognises we have to deal with the urban sprawl issue in the Perth metropolitan area and that we need to increase density in appropriate areas. He also said that a lot of people have the view, “Get on and do that but just not near me, thank you very much.” I must make the observation that there is a significant element of that attitude in Perth. We need to increase not only the density in appropriate areas, but also, equally importantly, the diversity of housing choice available to people. It is not just about cramming more people into well-established areas; it is about providing more housing choice compared with what Perth has historically had, given the very expansive developments that have occurred on single housing blocks with backyards and so on and, in some cases, quite large blocks. As people get older—we do have an ageing population—a lot of people who have been in established areas living in that sort of housing development would like to stay in the same area generally, but without the responsibility of having to look after the same amount of land with a relatively large garden and so on. They want to be able to downsize within the area they have lived in, for a number of decades in some cases, and that means having different forms of housing developments available for them. In some cases they still have quite expensive new developments and certainly the provision of high-quality developments is important.

In relation to urban development, the Peel region already stretches for about 150 kilometres from north to south. Our population density across the Perth metropolitan area is quite low at about 3 500 people per square kilometre, compared with Melbourne at 10 800 and Sydney at 14 700. We are not aiming to emulate Sydney and Melbourne, but we need to make some changes in that general direction. As I have said, we expect the population of the Perth and Peel regions to grow to about 3.5 million from the current level of two million by 2050. Just to put that into perspective, it has taken us about 180 years to get to the current level of two million, and we expect to almost double that population over the next 35 to 40 years or so. Of the population of the Perth metropolitan area at the moment, about 25 per cent are couples without children and about 22 per cent are single-person households. There are a lot of households in Perth in which people live or have historically lived in relatively larger houses and they do not, as I said, want to keep that size of house or block in a lot of cases—given that almost half Perth households have two or fewer people living in them. There is an increasing number of single households in particular, with a lot of younger people not living with partners or becoming married or whatever until later in life and wanting the option of living in well-located areas with a high level of amenity, access to services, cafes, restaurants, entertainment and so on. In other cases, there are elderly people whose partner has died and they want to be able to downsize and also live in an area that is well serviced rather than being much more distant from areas with a high level of amenity and services.

As I said, we are also facing a demographic shift, with an ageing population. People older than 55 years now represent about 22 per cent of the population and this will certainly increase over the next few decades. Many of these empty nesters seek to move from large family homes into small dwellings to suit their stage of life and in a lot of cases stay in the area in which they have lived for quite some time. In contrast to these demographic shifts, our existing housing stock in the metropolitan region is overwhelmingly stand-alone single houses, representing about 83 per cent of current housing stock. In simple terms, we do not have enough housing to accommodate either population growth or the type of housing that best meets the needs of significant sections of the community. In addition, there is the fact that about 67 per cent of people would prefer to live in a central region close to good public transport services, employment opportunities and amenities, but only half of that group is able to afford to do so at the moment. The desire to live in more central locations is understandable when we consider that about 62 per cent of all new jobs are in the central subregion of the Perth metropolitan area, and the cost of commuting from an outer suburb to Perth by car, according to a report of the Committee for Perth last year, can cost about \$10 000 a year. As I said, there is a changing situation in Perth, and we need to respond to those changing needs. We cannot do that without building different types of dwellings to those that predominately exist and what many parts of the community have historically been accustomed to. The “Perth and Peel@3.5million” documents that I mentioned provide a strategy that will meet the challenges facing Perth and will also assist in guiding local governments in preparation of the local planning strategies and schemes. Incidentally, those documents are out for public comment until the end of July. They provide a lot of information and background on some of these issues.

The residential design codes are actually contained in “State Planning Policy 3.1”. That state planning policy contains a section relating to multi-unit housing developments, and I make the comment initially that small apartment buildings built in predominantly single residential streets are not new in Perth. There are some very good examples of these so-called two-storey walk-up apartments that were built in the first half of the twentieth century and they quite often neighbour single homes in quiet streets of what have become some of Perth’s most desirable inner suburbs. These buildings have provided for people who did not want or need a single house for many years now. It is worth just seeing a few examples of these. Obviously, Hansard will not be able to record the pictures themselves, but I will describe them. At 16 Knutsford Street, North Perth, there is an example of one of these multi-unit developments that was built probably no later than 1960, I would say. That particular building is located adjacent to a single house. There is another example here at 34 York Street, North Perth, of a similar sort of development with a number of apartments in it—two storeys—in a predominantly residential area. From the photo we can see that on the other side of the road is a single residential house. Closer to Parliament House, in Carr Street, West Perth, there is another example of a similar sort of development that is also in a predominantly single residential area.

I think a lot of people probably have not realised that a lot of these developments have existed in Perth for a long time. It is the case that from the time the R-codes were introduced—I will refer to these further—in the 1980s until we undertook the changes in 2010, it became much harder to do those sorts of developments for reasons related to the details contained in the R-codes. I understand the R-codes always permitted those sorts of multiple dwellings in areas coded R35 and above, but each multiple dwelling needed to be on a minimum site area that was generally higher than that required for a single house or group dwelling, which essentially made the building of these types of small apartment buildings difficult or unattractive until the last couple of years or so. There was a hiatus for quite some time and maybe people have got used to the fact that they were not being constructed in single-residential areas for quite some time. A review of the R-codes was undertaken and was completed in 2010

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and it involved a lot of consultation with the local government sector and also, of course, the property industry. A draft of the changes was put out for public comment generally. I doubt most members of the wider public were aware of what was proposed, but, as I said, local governments were. The intention was to allow for a range of dwelling types to be developed in medium and high-density areas following those changes. This particular amendment to the R-codes was intended to remove the disincentive for development of multi-residential developments and to enable the delivery of a variety of housing types in established areas for the reasons I mentioned earlier as being necessary. These changes were subject to wide consultation with local governments, the Western Australian Local Government Association and the wider community. One of the most significant changes that was introduced was the removal of the requirement of the minimum lot size per dwelling for multi-unit developments in areas coded R30 and above.

Ms J.M. Freeman: That is the problem in Balga. That is a problem minister.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes, I understand. We have responded to the grievance the member raised three or so weeks ago.

Ms J.M. Freeman: But you are still sitting on the amendments.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Not at all. I will come back to what is being proposed soon.

What existed previously was replaced with a maximum plot ratio control that limited the amount of floor space permitted on a site, but did not necessarily change the number of dwellings. Importantly, the built form requirements for multi-unit developments remained the same as those for grouped dwellings or single houses. That means that multiple residential developments are subject to the same height and setback limitations as other types of developments. In simple terms, the total size of the building that is allowed has not changed. It is worth noting, particularly in affluent areas of Perth, that single houses are being built that are far larger than some of the multi-unit developments that would have been contemplated certainly a few years ago. Some of the single homes being built are really quite enormous and probably have a much larger visual impact on the streetscape and on neighbours than perhaps some of the multi-unit developments of some years ago.

I also make the observation that the changes to the R-codes in 2010 have resulted in some quite high quality residential developments that would have been previously prohibited. These developments provide the opportunity for people who may not want or need a large detached house to find a well-located home that suits their circumstances. There are current examples of these sorts of developments that I think our aesthetic, well designed and fit well into their neighbourhoods. There is a development on Third Avenue in Mt Lawley in an R40-zoned area that contains 12 dwelling units. Most people driving past would not realise that because it looks like quite a number of single homes in the area, but it actually contains 12 apartments. There is another example on Flamborough Street in Doubleview in an area that is also zoned R40 that contains 11 units.

Some members viewing these pictures are possibly expressing interest in these developments. They are very desirable.

Most people driving down the street would not appreciate the number of apartments contained in these sorts of developments. I think they are well designed and aesthetic. The second last example I will give is on Kooyong Road in Rivervale. This area is zoned R20/R40, which as a split coding that means that if certain requirements are met, the development can have the higher density. This development contains 10 dwellings. There are 10 resident parking bays and two visitor parking bays. The final example is on Smiths Avenue in Redcliffe. It is also zoned R20/R40 and has eight dwelling units, eight resident parking bays and two visitor parking bays. I think they are some quite good examples of what has been achieved as a result of the changes that were put in place in 2010.

I recognise that concerns have been raised, and I think it is fair to say that the changes put in place have been taken up more aggressively than expected. Local governments were probably not expecting the amount of change that has occurred. Some parts of the property development sector have also become aware that they can maximise their potential through the changes that were put in place. That was intended. It needs to be done in a well-designed way and perhaps not to the extent that has occurred. The proposed changes to the R-codes were advertised and put out for public comment in the second half of last year. We are getting close to the end of that process and are looking at restricting in a more targeted way where these developments can occur.

An issue has also been raised in relation to parking. That is why I mentioned the parking provisions at two of the examples of developments I just gave. Generally, the minimum parking requirement is 0.75 parking bays per apartment development. That probably needs to be increased and it is one of the changes being looked at together with restrictions on the extent and where these developments can occur, particularly in R30 and R35 areas, and ensuring that developments in R40 areas do not occur to the very wide extent that they are—for example, in the Balga area, as was identified.

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A particular issue in the City of Stirling is that about the same time as the changes were made to the R-codes, the City of Stirling initiated a rezoning. It was for very good reasons and obviously supported by the Western Australian Planning Commission and by me as Minister for Planning. But that rezoning blanket coded to R40 a lot of the City of Stirling, particularly in the Balga and Mirrabooka areas and other parts of the City of Stirling and it has had the unintended consequence that this sort of development has been taken up rather more than was expected. I expect changes will be agreed and finalised before long, but I also make the point that just as it takes time to put into effect any changes that allow increases to density through the planning system, it also takes some time to put into effect changes that limit these developments to a greater extent. That issue is being addressed. I agree that a lot of the concerns being raised are valid.

Ms J.M. Freeman: A bit quicker would be nice.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: As I said, the planning process is very deliberative and considered and we want to try to avoid unintended consequences wherever they may occur. But not everything that has happened has been detrimental, and the examples I gave of more recent developments I think most people would agree are aesthetic and probably appropriate for the areas. The fact they are being developed indicates there is a demand, and all the people buying into these developments obviously have made the choice that they would like to live there in a new apartment that is well located in an area of high amenity. There is that side to the argument as well.

Development assessment panels were established as a result of changes to the Planning Development Act four years ago. I am pleased to say that the legislation went through Parliament with the opposition's support. The broad support across Parliament for the introduction of development assessment panels was not surprising given their introduction had quite a long history. The starting point for their introduction was a review of business regulation across Australia in the late 1990s when the Howard government was in place. There were concerns about the amount of red tape that affected business activity across Australia and the amount of business regulation. One aspect of that related to the development industry. One of the recommendations to come out of the review of business regulation was that changes should be made to planning systems across Australia to more readily facilitate appropriate developments in the interests of the economy and the wider community, and to respond to the contemporary needs of Australia rather than the excessive regulation that did, and no doubt still does, exist in a lot of cases. Following the review of business regulation, the national Development Assessment Forum was established. I am not sure whether the forum still exists, but it did until fairly recently. The Development Assessment Forum had the role of more specifically addressing the issues that came out of the review of business regulation and how they affected the development sector and property industries in Australia generally. One of the outcomes of the Development Assessment Forum was the development of the eight leading practices model, I think it was. One of those leading practices was to establish a system whereby approvals for more significant projects would be given by an entity such as the development assessment panels that have now been established. The rationale of DAPs is to have a combination of both local input through local government councillors on the one hand, and on the other hand to ensure that there is adequate input and consideration on a professional basis by appropriately trained planners and architects, generally speaking, rather than decisions being excessively dominated by vocal local groups that, in the past, have been able to sway the decisions of councils more than I think most people on a considered basis would consider really desirable or respond to the long-term needs of the community. There is always local pressure and local comments and people who do not want change to occur in their local areas, and I can completely understand that. But we live in a wider community, we have all the population and demographic changes that are occurring, and we need to ensure we have a system that will adequately respond to changes for the wider community, for our children, and for younger people in the community who are increasingly finding it harder to afford housing in the major metropolitan centres of Australia, including Perth.

We also face transport and congestion issues. I acknowledge that we need to focus more on public transport issues in Perth. That is probably the next biggest challenge we need to face; whichever party is in government, funding all that is not easy at all. Issues around the number of cars on our roads and the distance people need to travel and so on are all relevant to this sort of debate, particularly the rationale for having a system whereby decisions are made in relation to more significant projects on a more professionally advised basis rather than just being swayed by local pressure excessively.

It is also important to realise that development assessment panels need to make decisions according to the local planning scheme in place for the particular locality, in the same way as councils, or officers if there is delegated authority, need to make decisions according to the local planning scheme. DAPs are no different. I think perhaps the real issue in all this is perhaps that there is discretion in a lot of planning schemes to allow for a larger amount of development than perhaps a lot of people might have anticipated initially, and perhaps in some cases those discretions need to be reviewed. Local governments need to think about that and review their planning schemes. If excessive discretion is allowed, that needs to be addressed. To change their planning schemes, of

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course, they need the support of the Western Australian Planning Commission and the Minister for Planning for amendments to occur, but if good arguments are put forward, they will be considered. What has come out to me in recent discussions around this whole issue is that perhaps the amount of discretion available to DAPs, just as that discretion is available to local government councils, needs to be looked at in some cases.

It is also important to realise that just as applicants could appeal to the State Administrative Tribunal if they disagreed with a local government decision in the past—they are still able to do so when local governments are making those decisions—applicants are able to appeal to SAT in relation to the outcome of a DAP decision.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Applicants being developers, minister?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes—proponents and developers, whether they are building 10-apartment units or whether they are building a major industrial facility or whatever. Yes, that is right.

There is no change as far as that is concerned. In some cases refusals are being made by DAPs or conditions put on that developers do not like, and they are appealing to SAT, just as they could appeal to SAT from a local government decision, as I mentioned. In some cases, mediation occurs in relation to DAP decisions and there is acceptance when the changes made are acceptable to the DAP, and there is an agreed outcome in the end. People see that as a bit of a secret process, but it is no different from appeals being made to SAT from local government decisions themselves. Indeed, DAPs simply stand in the place of a local government council. The processes they need to follow are the same, and, in fact, I think, as was intended, they are more transparent. DAP meetings are generally open to the public, submissions can be made, representations can be made, and the rationale of decisions, as I understand it, is normally given by the DAP. It is actually more transparent, and it is certainly a more professionally based process than has been the case in a lot of situations in the past. In the past, anecdotally, because of local pressure, councils refused projects, knowing that an appeal would be made to SAT and that SAT would probably, in the end, make the hard decision. In some cases, DAPs are making those decisions that SAT would have made in the past. People need to appreciate that, I think, and not just blame the DAP process. The real issue is what is in local planning schemes. What is in local planning schemes, just as in the metropolitan region scheme, in the end needs to meet the needs of Perth and people for the future, not just those who have lived here for the last few decades or more. We need to think about those coming after us; those young people in the community at the moment facing all the challenges of affordability and so on that I mentioned.

The DAPs figures I have been provided with are that in 2013–14 there were 206 applications to DAPs—at least these are initial applications; I am not referring to resubmitted applications when modifications were made. Of those, 187 were approved and 19 were refused. Therefore, not everything is being agreed to, and nor should it be; that was never intended. DAPs need to do their job professionally and take into account real issues on the basis of good planning and good design considerations. In 2014–15 to the end of May, of a total of 209 applications, 185 were approved and 24 were refused. Some of those that were refused, as I mentioned, ended up getting approved with modifications after appeals were made to SAT. So far in 2014–15, in fact, 15 have been approved after SAT consideration, and two of them have been finally refused; in 2013–14, 23 were finally approved by SAT, and one was ultimately refused. Those that were initially refused would not have been approved in the end without appropriate modifications being made. As I said, no doubt issues need to be addressed, and maybe the amount of discretion available is one area that needs to be looked at.

There are plenty of examples of the state government playing a very active role in relation to getting higher density development around major public transport routes in particular—train lines and so on. These sorts of developments have not just happened in the last six or seven years since we have been in government, of course; they go back to the early 1990s. There is the example of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority, as it used to be, and what has happened in the East Perth area. In Subiaco, going back to the early 1990s, a very large amount of development has happened around the train station that was put underground. I think everyone will agree that it is now a very desirable area where a lot of people like to visit and a lot like to live. Without the sorts of changes, which were contentious at the time to some extent, made by the state government with the establishment of the Subiaco Redevelopment Authority, we would not have what is there now. There would be pretty much wasteland and industrial land around the railway line and so on. A lot of changes are contentious at the time they are made but people come to accept them once they are in place and are successful. If they are done well, there is much wider community acceptance. I think we are going through some of that sort of change at the moment. I will not speak for much longer because I know others want to speak. There are plenty of other examples where higher density developments in well-planned precincts have been undertaken. Midland is one example, of course. Also in recent times quite a lot of apartment development has been happening in Bassendean. Claremont is another example. The member for Gosnells has a strong interest in the improvement plan that is now in place to enable the City of Gosnells, with the Planning Commission, to be much more interventionist to get good outcomes around the Gosnells train station. The Cockburn coast development is being

undertaken by LandCorp in the vicinity of the old South Fremantle power station. That will be high density but I hope well planned. I am sure it will be a very well planned, large-scale development that will accommodate a lot of people by the time it is completed. What has happened in Maylands around the Maylands train station is another good example. They are just some examples that come to mind, but there are others.

The member for West Swan referred to the need to focus more on precinct planning. That is a valid comment but it is the sort of issue that should be dealt with largely through local planning schemes; local governments have responsibility for planning in their areas. The state has a role to play but, obviously, the state government, the Department of Planning and the Planning Commission cannot do everything. A lot of that sort of work is done when the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority has responsibility and outcomes have been achieved. I mentioned Midland, Subiaco and East Perth and now Scarborough, which are under the MRA, as very good examples of what can be done. Very good precinct planning has been done certainly where the MRA is involved, but local governments have a substantial role to play in that respect.

I will allow time for other members to speak but it is desirable to broaden the debate a little or, more particularly, to identify some of the issues we need to face as a government and a Parliament; therefore I move —

Amendment to Motion

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I move —

To delete all words after “house” with the view to inserting —

- (1) Acknowledges the population growth pressures and demographic changes that are occurring in Western Australia, including an ageing population and an increasing number of single and two-person households.
- (2) Acknowledges that issues that need to be addressed through the planning system include —
 - (a) increasing the effective use of existing infrastructure;
 - (b) housing diversity and affordability; and
 - (c) transport costs.
- (3) Supports actions being taken by the government to ensure increases in housing density and diversity occur in appropriately targeted areas, including a review of the changes that were made to the residential design codes regarding multi-unit housing developments in 2010.

MR N.W. MORTON (Forrestfield) [6.23 pm]: I rise to make some brief comments on the amendment. I have been in the chamber for probably all but five minutes of the debate on the motion moved by the member for West Swan. I have to say—members opposite probably will not hear me say this very often—I have heard some good points raised by both sides of the house this evening, so I acknowledge that. Briefly this evening I want to focus on some things happening in my part of the world, specifically the Forrestfield–Airport Link project, the train station and the surrounding precinct because they are good examples of what we should be working towards as a state government with associated planning, particularly, as the member for West Swan mentioned in her contribution, the nexus between public transport and development. I will make my comments around that.

I will use a few visual aids tonight. The first is a newspaper article published on 13 June 2015 in the *Echo*, one of my local newspapers. I have to say that some of the Leader of the Opposition’s comments are a little bit embarrassing. He obviously came out to the electorate very quickly the other day on a fly in, fly out trip and made some comments about the train station and what he would like to see happening around it. I will quote from the article some of the comments the Leader of the Opposition made. The transport minister commented on some of the bus routes and the Leader of the Opposition is quoted as follows —

His comment came after a visit to the site of the future Forrestfield train station by Opposition leader Mark McGowan where he revealed he wanted to see a thriving metrohub developed around the station on the corner of Dundas and Maida Vale roads.

Mr McGowan said he wanted to see the area become a vibrant community hub, with innovative housing options, workplaces and entertainment venues.

He wanted more public transport options for Forrestfield, not just a rail line into the city.

His comments are plainly very embarrassing. We are working on 26 bus routes to service the area and, of course, the station itself, which will be a 20-minute commute into the CBD. The station has a major bus interchange. The government is all over all the things the Leader of the Opposition is talking about. It is already delivering all this stuff. He goes on to say —

“I want to see more public transport connectivity in and around Forrestfield and High Wycombe,” ...

He wants to see it so much that Labor has opposed it every time we have talked about delivering the Forrestfield–Airport Link. He talks about how important the eight-kilometre rail extension is and how it will integrate the eastern suburbs with the city. We have already ticked off on that. He says —

“A Forrestfield metrohub would be a major driver of new jobs where people will live, work and play.

“After years of focussing on the Perth CBD, I want to see places where people live in the suburbs become well-planned precincts linked to an integrated transport network.”

That is exactly what we are doing. When the Leader of the Opposition was in government, how much did his government spend to deliver these kinds of precincts? Zero. The work is being done on that. I find that highly embarrassing, particularly given that, in the same week, an article was published in the competing local newspaper, which published the Forrestfield development concept—all the plans we are working on, with commentary from me about what we are delivering. I will go into that in some detail because some great work is being done with the Department of Transport, the Department of Planning and, of course, the Shire of Kalamunda. The member for Churchlands showed some keen interest in this project. This is a shining example of what we can deliver. The Forrestfield train station will deliver a 20-minute commute into the city and will accommodate 2 500 parking bays and the bus interchanges, which I have already mentioned. Spanning out from that will be a new commercial mixed-use centre with, I imagine, multi-storey office blocks with office workers and those sorts of tenants moving in. Further from that there will be a new retail centre, something that has been missing in that area for some time. It will be a comprehensive retail centre that will give amenity to the people of the foothills and the eastern suburbs which they have not had before. Spanning out from that will be high-density residential options providing—I have heard the figure of about 4 000 dwellings—for people within walking distance of the train station. This is a great example of what we can do to maximise investment in public infrastructure—namely, the Forrestfield–Airport Link project—and then complement it with the subsequent planning and development around this precinct to ensure that, firstly, the train station is sustainable, and, secondly, the residents and the people who live and work there have good amenities. That is what this project is all about; it is all about delivering.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: It is great to hear that these excellent planning principles of “Directions 2031” and “Perth and Peel@3.5million” are being applied in your electorate. Unfortunately, out my way I have a situation in which the local council is embarking on a scheme amendment and it is not applying some of these key principles like in and around major transport hubs or in and around major activity centres. It is creating a lot of angst for the community out there. I hope that maybe some members of the council out my way can have a look at how it is being applied in your electorate so they might be able to think about retrofitting what they are doing.

Mr N.W. MORTON: That was a very long interjection but I take the member’s point. I acknowledged at the start of my contribution that members opposite have raised some valid points. Coming back to this development, it is certainly an excellent example of what the state government can deliver for a community.

Going through the plans, I have talked about commercial precincts, retail precincts and high-density residential. I have not talked about new sporting fields, but they exist, and open spaces, which have been incorporated into the plan, which again adds to the amenity of people living in the area. People are already approaching me about potential opportunities within the new retail and commercial precinct that will be developed. It is an exciting time for the east metropolitan area. It will be exciting to see what we can achieve when we try to maximise the development around public infrastructure, particularly public transport. Further, it is about ensuring that Forrestfield is not just a journey’s end but a destination. In my mind, I see pop-up markets on weekends, office workers using the restaurants and bars during the week and then families and mums and dads making use of them on the weekends. I see outdoor cinemas in the summertime—those sorts of activities that east metro, the Forrestfield area and the foothills have been devoid of forever. No government has ever invested in this kind of amenity and this kind of infrastructure for the east metro area. It is fantastic. I will stand here and make the point proudly that it has never occurred before. It is occurring now and it is not lost on the community. Long may it continue because it is long overdue. This project excites me. It definitely excites my community. I am sure that the Leader of the House, the member for Kalamunda, is probably fielding some interest as well. It will certainly affect his community with the connectivity that will be delivered through bus interchanges and the amenity that will exist in and around that precinct. It will be good for the foothills, the hills and the east metro area.

I will conclude my remarks shortly. As I said, I wanted to make only a brief contribution. I know that other members want to contribute to this debate tonight. We saw the embarrassing performance of the Leader of the Opposition the last time he came out to my electorate when he was mentioned in my local papers as saying that we failed the community on the Berkshire Road–Roe Highway intersection. What a joke! I challenge any

member to come to my electorate and look at what is happening with the Berkshire Road–Roe Highway intersection. It is a major blackspot. There is a crash at that intersection every 10 days, on average. It has been eradicated by this Liberal–National state government. It is no wonder that a number of references are being made to the WA Labor Party and *Sesame Street*. I was trying to work through the characters to see who the Leader of the Opposition might play.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

Mr N.W. MORTON: It might be the Cookie Monster. I thought that for starters. But we all know that the Cookie Monster is in therapy after the member for Victoria Park did whatever it was that he did to the Cookie Monster. I worked it out. It is Oscar the Grouch. The Leader of the Opposition is Oscar the Grouch because he is full of rubbish and always negative. I suggest that rather than come out and run scurrilous commentary in my local paper, he climb back into his bin and leave good governing to the Liberal and National Parties!

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [6.34 pm]: I rise to speak to the amendment moved by the Minister for Planning to the motion moved by the member for West Swan. I was relieved to hear some of the comments that the member for Forrestfield put forward about transport. The Minister for Planning also talked about transport, but I felt it was just in passing. I was concerned when I looked at the draft “Perth and Peel@3.5million” document, this update on the “Directions 2031 and beyond: metropolitan planning and beyond the horizon” document, to see no mention of transport in the minister’s foreword. That concerns me because this link between planning and transport, as has been highlighted by the member for Forrestfield in his speech, is so central to what we are talking about in this place. I was pleased when I went on to read the chairman of the Western Australian Planning Commission’s foreword. He certainly mentions this issue of connectivity. I notice that the member for Forrestfield used “connectivity” as well. It is essential that in this denser city we have that sense of connectivity so people can get around. That is absolutely critical to the viability of the city. That is in the amendment to the motion that the minister moved. We want to have targeted density.

The quote that the minister referred to from Bernard Salt is interesting. It suggests that there is a high degree of nimbyism in the community. In my modest dwelling in Thornlie, I am surrounded by densification. I am very pleased about that. But I want to point out some of the problems because they are critical to this debate. These are the problems that we have to solve now, otherwise we will lose the Western Australian public. These are the problems that come with a densification that is not carefully planned. There are problems especially around parking. The minister touched on this. Right next door to me is a building on an 830-square metre block that will have eight units in it. That is tremendous. We are very close to the Thornlie train station. It is about a three to five-minute walk to the train station. Just as the amendment states, this is a targeted area ripe for densification. I totally agree. But we have a situation in which developers are squashing eight one-bedroom and two-bedroom units into a building—a structure—that is very small. Squashing those units on this 830-square metre block will require that each unit has only one parking bay. An assumption is being made that everyone living in this complex will be able to get to their place of work by train perhaps or a vast combination of other transport modes and they will be one-car households. That is a very big assumption. Many people who live in my area do not work at the end of a train line. They will need two cars. This is why we have to make that connection in our discussion—in our policy planning between the transport issue and the planning issue. It has to be there.

We could also be really clever when it comes to providing incentives to people to have one-car households. I see no effort being made in this direction at all. Taking the example of the property next door to me, those units will be sold for around \$350 000 or \$400 000 each. It is clear that the developer has been able to squeeze in an extra two units on the block because he has to provide only one parking bay per unit. I think it would be reasonable to develop some sort of incentive mechanism that would be partly funded by the developer, who is making an additional profit because he is squashing more units on the site. This is something that I have put to the City of Gosnells, which, after all, gave final approval to this development, but it has gone nowhere. I am really disappointed by that because I think it is a model in which we need to come up with some sort of incentive mechanism that rewards people for living in one-car households; otherwise, the consequence will be that a whole lot of cars will be parked on a street that is already saturated with parking because down the bottom of the street, only 300 metres away, is a primary school. Of course, there are the usual morning drop-off and afternoon pickup traffic hassles. They are fairly passing really, but they cause a lot of upset in the community for 15 to 20 minutes in the morning and afternoon.

But that aside, another urban development infill density project is going on, which is exactly the same as the project happening next to me. This one is three doors down and is putting another eight units on what was once an ordinary suburban block. Across the road are more developments. My area is in danger of being saturated with units. I am concerned that at some point there may be an oversupply of units in the Thornlie area; that is quite a possibility. However, the first issue we must tackle is parking space. If we do not get that right, we will

lose the support of people. Already, my neighbours who have been there for many years are complaining about this very point. The people in our street were consulted. We received advice from the City of Gosnells and given the opportunity to comment, but elsewhere that is not the case. If somebody can say that their project is compliant or can through conditions be made compliant, they do not have to advertise to their neighbours. This was the situation in Earls Court in Thornlie where one of my constituents, Jan Killeen, noticed that the house next door had been demolished, and suddenly the footings were going in for six two-storey units on an area zoned R20/R30. This level of densification did not require any consultation with the neighbours. That was a surprise! That is just a terrible way to get people offside and to make them think that they are being totally ignored. It is a real disappointment to everyone that that is how things have proceeded in this instance. We inquired with the City of Gosnells, which said that because the area is zoned R20/R30 and there is a densification policy, there was no need to advertise and talk to the neighbours. It is damaging and unfair to suddenly have a six-unit, double-storey complex on an 800-odd square metre block foisted upon a community that is otherwise very much a classic suburban low-rise area. It is unreasonable to put that on people, and it is something that we should have been able to appeal against.

This leads me to another point. The minister talked about the appeal rights that applicants, developers, have. However, our planning system has no means for people who are affected stakeholders, neighbours, to lodge an appeal. That is totally unreasonable. There is a gross inequity there. If something does not quite work out to the developer's liking, they are entitled to appeal, but the affected neighbours have no right of appeal. Where is the justice in that? It is something that we have to address. People feel justifiably aggrieved when they have suffered the consequences of those poor decisions and not had any appeal right at all.

Mr J.H.D. Day: People can make submissions to the State Administrative Tribunal if there is an interested party that wants to lodge an appeal. The member is right—third parties cannot initiate appeals but they can make submissions if they have a relevant interest in the matter.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: It is interesting that the minister used the term “third parties” because I do not know that that is what we should be calling these people. These people are affected stakeholders. If we call them “third parties”, we would be casting the net too broad and, justifiably, the minister would straightaway be receiving submissions on his desk from the Urban Development Institute of Australia telling him to not allow this. But if we say people are stakeholders or affected residents, there is a real natural justice issue there that we must address. I am hopeful that in time that will come about.

The amendment talks about densification, which I support. I am not someone who suffers from that disease of nimbyism; I support densification, but it has to be done correctly. It can be done particularly well on brownfield sites on which there are decaying properties and where there is a need to move on. The minister mentioned Lissiman Street, Gosnells, on which, through the mechanism of an improvement plan, we are about to make progress. The Lissiman Street matter has taken an incredible amount of time to be resolved. I first started campaigning on it in 2009, and here we are in 2015 still going through the final rounds of consultation. I was pleased to note that in September 2011 the Western Australian Planning Commission gave a final sign-off on Lissiman Street, which has been controversial in the eyes of some people because it involved the acquisition of privately owned land. We have to recognise that sometimes the problems that we have with urban renewal are due to the failure of private capital to move forward and to act when there is an opportunity. We often talk about how amazingly imaginative and creative the private sector can be, but often people in the private property owning sector are afraid to develop, afraid to take risks and afraid to move forward. Fortunately—and I acknowledge the role of the minister in this matter—we now have a document entitled “Improvement plan No. 39”, which states that through the Planning and Development Act —

... IT IS HEREBY

CERTIFIED THAT FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADVANCING THE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF ALL THAT LAND WITHIN THE LISSIMAN STREET PRECINCT (“THE LAND”) SHOULD BE REPLANNED, REDESIGNED, DEVELOPED AND RE-SUBDIVIDED AND PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR IT TO BE USED FOR SUCH PURPOSES AS MAY BE APPROPRIATE; AND

RECOMMENDED TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR THAT THE LAND SHOULD BE SO DEALT WITH AND USED AND MADE THE SUBJECT OF IMPROVEMENT PLAN NO. 39 AS DEPICTED ON DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING PLAN NUMBERED 3.2580 ANNEXED HERETO.

This has been an opportunity for people, and it keeps the door open so that private property owners can be a part of this and they can see their investment in that area expanded and developed by using the expertise of those bodies that will be brought in to help develop this area. LandCorp has been contracted to help, and other

Ms Rita Saffioti; Acting Speaker; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr John Day; Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Ms Eleni Evangel

organisations are also involved, especially the expertise of the City of Gosnells. I think this has been a very positive step forward. I acknowledge the important role the City of Gosnells has played to push this along and I am pleased about that.

There are other issues around densification and I am concerned about what will happen when new constructions go up that obliterate or remove solar access. If a property is extended upwards on the north side of another property, that can sometimes block out solar access. We know how important access to sunlight is for good solar passive design, especially in winter, so that the sunlight can come into properties to warm them up and provide heating, which is absorbed by the thermal mass that many people design into new homes. We have to maintain solar access. That is an important consideration.

Those are some of the issues in my mind when dealing with these matters. However, the matter of meeting the needs of the community as we go forward has to be done in tandem with the consideration of urban planning and densification and the consideration of how the transport network will evolve also. I have spoken about the parking issue, but of course much has to be done to ensure that we have the forms of transport we need. In the 1980s and 1990s I lived in high-density environments, and for most of the time I did not need to own a car. In London and Paris it is possible to get around perfectly well by using metro or underground trains and occasionally a taxi. It was a perfectly satisfactory way to get around. However, in Perth we are locked into the need for everyone to own a car. The hope that car owners will become a lower percentage of the population seems so far from that. If anything, the statistics would show that car ownership is going up per household. That is unfortunate. We have to provide those incentives. It is interesting that developers are clearly doing very well by creating these denser living situations. They should be providing some of the funding for those incentives that could encourage people towards being one-car households.

The review of the Directions 2031 document and the “Perth and Peel@3.5 million” document outline this very disturbing situation of Perth currently sprawling about 150 kilometres. I personally find it very disturbing that the city extends from Two Rocks in the north to Bouvard in the south. It is an area that will not be functional as a community. I will make a comparison. When I lived in London, there was a tendency for people to go home and live in their part of London, whereas in a city that is more densely populated, such as Paris, there is a tendency for people to cross over to the other side. In Paris, people are a bit more tempted to be mobile, even though with the 20 arrondissements in Paris people say that it is a city of villages. They like to think that each area has its own village field. It still encourages that mobility, no doubt because of the tremendous transport network. I am concerned that Perth is really stuck in this sprawl situation and that that will continue. Looking at the spatial plan presented in the latest document from the Minister for Planning, the 150-kilometre sprawl down to Bouvard really shows that we are talking about taking in a huge part of the Shire of Murray. The Mandurah area is being absorbed into one great Perth urban mass. That really concerns me. We are awaiting the strategic assessment. That will make a host of sweeping changes to how we urban plan—I imagine it will, when it eventually arrives. I am keen to keep apprised of how the commonwealth and state governments are managing the whole strategic assessment process. It is something we need to know more about. That needs to be presented to us at a fairly frequent rate, with explanations presented at various forums around the place. Tomorrow afternoon, the Urban Bushland Council WA Inc will present some information on the strategic assessment. That is very much welcomed.

The Minister for Planning suggested that the density situation we have is something that we should all be enjoying and embracing. I agree with that, but we have to get it right. There are plenty of examples where we are not getting it right, hence the original motion moved by the member for West Swan. May I have an extension, please?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.M. Britza): Not on the amendment, member.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: The intent of the amendment has some merit but in fact the minister is missing the point. Densification in targeted areas needs to consider the problems we have with densification. We need to accept that we have a lot of work to do in making that densification work so that people are supportive of it. We are currently losing the support of people. I am seeing that throughout the suburb of Thornlie.

MR S.K. L'ESTRANGE (Churchlands) [6.54 pm]: I rise to first of all agree with the amendment moved by the Minister for Planning and with the sentiments of the minister with regard to the need for us to increase density and housing choice, and to make sure that people who would like to downsize and remain in their area as they get older are given the option to do so. Those are very sound and reasonable expectations. I believe that the policy “Perth and Peel@3.5 million” as a subregional framework helps articulate exactly how the minister and the government want to go about achieving that. The key to success lies in how local governments, the development assessment panels and the State Administrative Tribunal execute the state government plan. Sound planning for infill and housing choice will certainly help achieve the intentions of the state government.

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In my electorate of Churchlands, the Town of Cambridge has commenced scheme amendment 31. The community has identified a number of serious concerns with this scheme amendment, and that unfortunately makes it difficult to build the support of the local population with regard to planning. I would like to share some of those concerns with members.

A constituent has come to me and raised the following points about this scheme amendment. The first point is —

It misinterprets the infill objectives and locational criteria within both Directions 2031 and the CSRPF—

That is the central sub-regional planning framework—

and as a consequence, severely over reaches with an ad hoc, extensive and severely detrimental density response in established suburbs under the guise of providing increased housing diversity.

The second point is —

It ignores the well established principles and approach to infill outlined in Directions 2031, the CSRPF and various State planning policies which stipulate that more significant density should be concentrated around activity centres and public transport infrastructure and not in established suburbs.

The third point is —

It presents a far reaching infill proposal in the absence of any current approved Local Planning Strategy, Local Housing Strategy and/or Local Centre Strategy which would examine both density and diversity across the entire local government area and establish clear and substantiated strategic direction to guide the statutory implementation framework.

The fourth point is —

It uses an inappropriate statutory mechanism (an Additional Use right), and applies disjointed standards to override the R Code density controls applicable to the R12.5 coding, resulting in a confused and dysfunctional framework. It doubles (or potentially triples or quadruples) the allowable density where it applies, and introduces a suite of very loose architectural based statutory controls in an attempt to manage the range of problems the random density uplift itself creates.

The final point is —

It has the potential to establish Cambridge as a poor exemplar for urban infill with potentially damaging consequences for the implementation of the more considered state government infill policies.

I wanted to share that with the members here tonight, because it is an example of why we need to ensure that issues such as this are avoided, if we are to bring the people with us on this journey towards an increased population of 3.5 million in Perth and Peel, and so that we have the capacity, as a minister correctly outlines, to increase density and housing choice, and to offer people as they get older more housing choice close to where they live, maybe in a smaller residence.

I conclude by saying that I support the amendment to this motion, because I see the need for effective planning as our city grows towards a population of 3.5 million. The key is to ensure, particularly in the early stages as we roll out the “Perth and Peel@3.5 million” policy direction, that we oversee the changes to infill and housing choices very carefully so that people will come on board with us. That is all I have to say for the moment.

MS E. EVANGEL (Perth) [6.58 pm]: I want to add a couple of minutes’ worth of commentary to the amendment that has been moved by the Minister for Planning. I agree with the minister that as our population is increasing rapidly in the metropolitan area and in our communities, it is certainly important that we address the issue of density. Certainly in the electorate of Perth, which I represent, density is an issue that I come across on a daily basis. People just need to take a drive through the electorate of Perth and they will see for themselves that a lot of construction is underway at the moment, with the intended purpose, of course, of providing housing opportunities for our rapidly increasing population. That increase in density is occurring very rapidly in the electorate of Perth. However, having said that, there are obviously areas in which we should not be proceeding with the kind of density that we are seeing.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm
