

SAVE PERTH HILLS

Statement

HON DR BRAD PETTITT (South Metropolitan) [6.25 pm]: I rise tonight to inform the house of an event that I attended that had some very important messages that I think are worth sharing. The event was a rally held by Save Perth Hills earlier this month in response to an amended structure plan around North Stoneville. I know that people have heard about this. It is a development by the Satterley Property Group. I was happy to speak at the rally. With my planning hat on, I felt that this project would add severely to perhaps the biggest chunk of urban sprawl to the north east that we have seen in the state. It certainly should not be supported. Many other speakers had some really important things to say, and I want to share that with this group.

To add context, this site is 555 hectares. It is 150 hectares bigger than Kings Park and is a larger area than London's Hyde Park and New York's Central Park combined. If it were to go ahead, 200 000 hectares containing 60 000 mature trees, some of which are more than 100 years old, would be bulldozed, along with 14 registered Aboriginal culturally significant sites. There was an amazing range of speakers at the rally, including First Nation leaders like Nolan Hunter and a bunch of very impressive locals. I would like to be able to quote them all, but there is not time, so I thought I would pick a few. Dr Wayne Gregson is well known to members. He is a former assistant police commissioner and was the inaugural Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner at the time of the Mt Helena and Stoneville fires. He also lives in the Perth hills. He made some important comments in the context that DFES had previously spoken about this development and said that there was no way the rural road infrastructure would allow for the safe evacuation of up to 4 000 people.

According to my notes, here is some of what he had to say —

The human fallout of bushfire—trauma, personal, financial and lasting mental health effects need to be a priority when considering to further populate our bushfire regions with thousands more people and thousands more houses. As we move forward with any proposed development, we must heed the lessons of the past and we must act to truly protect people. We need to ensure that we never place thousands more people knowingly in harm's way.

DFES has opposed this development proposal since 2019. The reason for that is primacy of life is DFES's priority. DFES has a duty of care to protect life.

Development proposals like the one that's brought us here today are testing whether we as a society and our government at all levels are listening to our experience, are learning lessons, and most of all, whether we are applying those lessons learned—mitigating future risk, and authentically trying to prevent history from preventing itself.

The climate risks are increasing and yet today we are forced to rally against the possibility of tripling the local population in an extreme bushfire zone.

They are pretty important words from someone who I think is highly credible.

Interestingly, Bob Brown, a former Greens leader, was also invited to speak. He spoke about the area from an environmental perspective and commented on how this part of Perth hills is home to endangered animals, birds, flora and fauna. There are 27 black cockatoo nesting sites on the identified area. According to my notes, this is some of what he said —

What a fantastic place, this Eden on the eastern uplands of the great metropolitan, fast growing metropolitan city of Perth, and it's a test for all humanity that it is kept an Eden and not just handed to destruction.

It is up to the Government beyond the Planning Commission to ensure it does not happen.

It is our duty and this generation in the greatest age of destruction of the natural realm ... to stand firm to protect places like Stoneville, that forest, its great trees, its wildlife, its circling eagles, its cockatoos... its chuditches, its kangaroos with the kangaroo path ... that I hope in the future, as has happened for millennia into the past, will be a path for children ... who will say thank you for the people who stood for it.

It is actually a young person in this context who I want to finish with. A young woman named Cleo Williams got up and spoke, and her speech stuck in my head. I really wanted to share a bit of it because I think this captures it. It was a very amusing speech. I am not quite sure that I will be as amusing as her, but let me give it a go. She said —

Let's talk about... **my** future—and this **DINOSAUR** of a development.

The future Nigel's development is shaping for me, right now—comprises a heat island, featuring more than 1000 (likely black), **HEAT SUCKING** rooves, hundreds of metres of heat-trapping fake grass, around 6 kilometres of heat-capturing black bitumen roads—which will all combine to create a massive carbon footprint releasing **TONNES OF GREENHOUSE GASES** into the atmosphere of **MY** future.

Furthermore,—The staggering loss of **60,000** Nth Stoneville trees,—**a major carbon sink, GONE for ever.**

Unless Nigel gets to them first, **35,640 TONNES OF CO2** will be removed by those trees in the next 27 years.

My question is —

How do Satterley, **AND THE GOVT**, plan to justify this extreme loss when the Govt is legislating - **this year**—for net zero emissions by 2050?????

Nigel reckons he can throw a handful of his **carbon dirty dollars** towards black cockatoo research—to **COUNTERACT** destroying North Stoneville’s black cockatoo habitat. Work that one out...

Oh—and grow a few trees—in **another region**—because his diesel devouring bulldozers have destroyed thousands of old-age trees at Nth Stoneville.

Your plan is out of step and out of time with modern planning.

It’s not only laughable but embarrassing and **SO WRONG**.

No roads, no public transport, NO METRONET, no sewerage, no support services, no employment, no safety and **NO WATER**—**AND you’re going to BLOW UP, EXPLODE the biggest hill on SITE AND ALL its tens of thousands of trees—TO FORCE the environment to suit your**

Outdated. Out of step, Out of time—dinosaur development.

These were very powerful words from community members, experts and the like. It comes at a broader crossroads for the kinds of developments that we keep approving in this state. This is clearly one of the worst for many of the reasons that I have identified, but again up and down the coast, and now pushing out to the hills, we are putting more and more sprawl. Every time we put up one of those houses out there, we get fewer people where we need them, which is in our centres and places such as the Perth CBD, Midland, Armadale and Freo where we want people living downtown and activating our centres. Instead we are encouraging more and more people to live on the urban fringe in unsustainable locations.

I want to thank Save Perth Hills for an excellent rally. An estimated 1 500 to 2 000 people attended. I was really happy to add my comments to the really strong community voice. I really hope that we see a turning point. With the strategic assessment of the Perth and Peel regions being quietly sidelined days before Christmas—\$7 million and 11 years’ worth of work just quietly put in the cupboard, never to be seen again—this state needs a plan to stop sprawl, to stop the ad hoc developments happening and the constant bulldozing of the increasingly precious urban bushland that we have left. That urban bushland is one of the world’s great biodiversity hotspots. There is a great opportunity. With my first member’s statement for the year, I hope in 2023 that we see a turnaround and this state has a plan for good urban development that is sustainable going forward.