

Hansard

Legislative Assembly Budget Estimates Committee B

2 June 2010

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I refer to the third dot point on page 543, which reads —
Significant improvement and amendment to the planning framework is required.

It then refers to —

‘Planning Makes it Happen: A Blueprint for Planning Reform’ ...

Can the minister give me some indication what this is, what it is aimed to do and how the minister will know whether or not it is successful?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: There is an extensive program of reform underway in the Department of Planning and in the planning portfolio. We touched on some of that earlier in relation to development assessment panels and the bill that is currently before Parliament. There are other aspects to that bill to ensure that we have a planning system that is more responsive to the state’s needs, including the ability to put in place improvement schemes, where necessary, to follow on from improvement plans that can be created currently.

Other aspects of that include ensuring that the WA Planning Commission, with the support of the government of course, can require local planning schemes to be amended to incorporate state planning policies. There is also a provision to ensure that data can be collected from local governments to indicate performance on the time taken for approvals and so on; and there are some other aspects to that bill as well.

That is therefore one of the major aspects of reform that is occurring under the general heading of “Planning Makes it Happen: A Blueprint for Planning Reform”. There are other changes underway as well, including a review of the so-called model scheme text and other changes as well. However, I will ask Mr Lumsden to comment on that a bit further.

Mr Lumsden: The point I wish to make firstly on that planning blueprint is that it was not simply developed in-house; it was developed following extensive consultation with industry, local government and all the major players to try to identify the key issues that had to be addressed from the planning reform agenda; and the blueprint sets them out. As the minister said, there are a number of aspects to implementing that blueprint. Obviously the current bill to amend the Planning Development Act is one aspect.

The other aspect is to amend the model scheme text to ensure that the generic key general planning provisions for town planning schemes are consistent across the state in both intent and clarity of the wording. The other part of the model scheme text would be more specific aspects relating to local government schemes in individual areas of local government. That scheme text is currently being worked on.

Another issue in the blueprint is reform of conditions or provisions relating to structure plans and outline development plans that often create confusion within the industry in not only the validity of those conditions, but also the detail being applied. We are also reviewing all the current planning conditions that are used by the department to ensure, firstly, that they are relevant, and if they are not, they will be removed; and, secondly, to assure the Department of Planning and other agencies that the conditions are appropriate and can be substantiated for any approval to be issued by the department.

These are issues that have been raised by industry in particular, and we are trying to ensure that this planning reform agenda, which is ongoing—it is not just simply contained in the proposed amendment to the Planning and Development Act—can be implemented over the following 12 to 18 months on a progressive basis in conjunction and in liaison with relevant players in the planning reform agenda that we are running.