

Better Planning Network Inc.

Media Release



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An affiliation of more than 420 community groups

Amendments Won't Fix Bad Planning Bills

The Better Planning Network has expressed caution about Planning Minister, Brad Hazzard's, statement that the Government is prepared to consider some changes to its Planning Bill.

"We welcome Minister Hazzard's recognition that things need to change," said BPN's Corinne Fisher, "but mere tinkering around the edges is not enough to address the significant concerns highlighted by a wide range of stakeholders in submissions on the Planning Bills."

"The Minister cannot pretend that Premier O'Farrell's election commitment to return planning powers to the community can be satisfied by asking people to comment on strategic level plans that most of them never even hear about."

"Nor can he claim that the divisive strategy of restricting code assessable development to growth corridors is any answer at all. This creates two classes of citizens – those who can have some say about the future look and development of their neighbourhood and the rest who remain at the mercy of the big developers. The BPN cannot support such an unjust and unfair proposition."

Ms Fisher said: "We are cautiously optimistic about the apparent commitment to restore some balance in decision making between the economic imperative and environmental and social considerations. However, we have a perfectly good model, using the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development to drive decision-making. This model is widely accepted by most stakeholders who made submissions on the Planning Bills."

"We also note that the Minister made no undertaking to address issues such as Strategic Compatibility Certificates that will allow developers to ride roughshod over Local Environmental Plans, nor did he promise to do anything about the serious concerns expressed by the ICAC that the legislation contains serious corruption risks."

"The problem is that the Minister's Planning Bills are just plain bad legislation. The Government should admit this and go back to the drawing board to come up with a sound, balanced and visionary planning system that will serve the State for another thirty years."

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For Immediate Release
19 September 2013