STATE DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, INNOVATION AND MANUFACTURING COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr DA Pegg MP (Chair)
Mr JM Krause MP
Ms SL Bolton MP
Mr MA Boothman MP
Ms CL Lui MP (via videoconference)
Mrs C Mullen MP

Staff present:

Ms S Galbraith (Committee Secretary)
Ms R Stacey (Assistant Committee Secretary)

PUBLIC HEARING—INQUIRY INTO THE FOREST WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT BILL 2020

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 15 JUNE 2020

Brisbane

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The committee met at 9.48 am.

CHAIR: Good morning. I declare open this public hearing for the committee's inquiry into the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill 2020. Thank you for your interest and attendance today. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we are today. My name is Duncan Pegg. I am the member for Stretton and chair of the committee. The committee members here with me today are Mr Jon Krause, the member for Scenic Rim and deputy chair; Ms Cynthia Lui MP, the member for Cook, who is joining us via teleconference; Mrs Charis Mullen MP, the member for Jordan; Ms Sandy Bolton MP, the member for Noosa; and, last but not least, Mr Mark Boothman MP, the member for Theodore.

The purpose of today's hearing is to assist the committee with its examination of the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill 2020, which was referred to this committee for detailed consideration and report by 3 July this year. The committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. The committee will not require evidence to be given under oath, but I remind witnesses that intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. You have previously been provided with a copy of instructions to witnesses, so we will take those as read. Media may be present and will be subject to my direction at all times. The media rules endorsed by the committee are available from committee staff if required. I remind all those present today, both in person and joining us via videoconference, that it is possible you might be filmed or photographed during the proceedings. I ask that if you take a question on notice you provide the information to the committee by 10 am on Monday, 22 June this year, please.

We have a number of witnesses appearing via videoconference and teleconference today. In the absence of normal nameplates, I ask witnesses to identify themselves when speaking in response to a direct question. That will help both Hansard and others who may be viewing the proceedings today. Committee members will also endeavour to clearly identify themselves when asking questions to minimise any confusion. For those appearing via videoconference, I also ask that you place your microphones on mute unless you are speaking. This will prevent audio interference and background noise. Finally, I remind everyone to turn mobile phones off or to silent mode, please.

ROBERTSON, Mr Islay, Chief Operating Officer, HQPlantations (via videoconference)

STEPHENS, Mr Mick, Chief Executive, Timber Queensland (via videoconference)

CHAIR: I invite you both to make an opening statement. We might start with HQPlantations, if you are ready?

Mr Robertson: Sure. Thank you for inviting me along. I am assuming everyone can hear me satisfactorily?

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Robertson: Thank you. Just by way of background, HQPlantations manage about 300,000 hectares of land in Queensland—from Cairns down to close to the border with New South Wales. About 200,000 hectares of those are pine plantations, mostly southern pine introduced from the Americas, and also a native pine *Araucaria cunninghamii*, or hoop pine. The area in question for this wind farm carries about 70,000 hectares of pine plantations and generates more than one million cubic metres of log per year which is mostly processed locally in the regional area. That ends up as timber in houses, panelling for housing and other things, and landscape materials.

A key element for managing our plantations is the protection of them from a range of events but particularly fire. We do a lot of detection and a lot of protection works, particularly prescribed burning. We undertake about 20,000 to 25,000 hectares of prescribed burning a year. We build and maintain firebreaks, and we access the plantations for suppression. Of interest, in the southern pine plantations we will do prescribed burning underneath those pines two or three times during their 27-year rotation length. Interestingly, our losses from the most significant fire season we have had since 1994 were significant but nowhere near as significant as those elsewhere. That is largely as a function of the fire protection works we do in our plantations.

Turning to wind farms, I note that there are now many wind farms, in Europe in particular, that sit above the forest. On a personal note, 10 years ago I was working in South Australia and was approached by a wind farm developer. We thought, 'This is potentially something that would go well with our estate—multiple use,' but the developer proceeded to tell us that he needed to clear 20 or 30 hectares or more per turbine site because the turbines sat inside the plantation. The difference here is that a couple of years ago we were approached by Forest Wind and they started talking about the turbines sitting above the plantation. While you could argue that there was conflict between the two land uses, all of a sudden the conflicts sort of melted away.

CHAIR: I will ask you to wind up, please, Mr Robertson, because the committee members will have questions and we have a pretty extensive schedule today.

Mr Robertson: Okay. I just flag that with this wind farm they are talking about 400 or 500 hectares of impact on our estate of about 70,000 hectares in this area. That is less than one per cent. They are going to invest in roads. Additional fire protection works will be done. We have had extensive discussions with them about how we can work with each other, and we are comfortable that we can work together.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Robertson. I will now ask Mr Stephens from Timber Queensland to give a brief opening statement.

Mr Stephens: Thank you, Chair. Timber Queensland is the peak industry body for the forest and timber industry. We represent the whole supply chain in the plantation and hardwood sectors—from growing and processing right through to manufacturing. The plantation softwood industry is about 80 per cent of the state's output in terms of log production and value-added product. The point is that this industry does have a pretty big footprint in terms of downstream processing. After meat processing and sugar, we are the third most valuable primary industry in terms of processing in the state. The security around the resource and growing our resource base is critical, because we can value-add that through the supply chain. Our business is about the timber industry. Obviously, we support all opportunities for value-adding in the sector. We are keen about growing our plantation resource base in terms of new plantation investment, enhancing the productivity of existing plantations and then looking at manufacturing.

With the wind farm, we have had some consultations with Forest Wind Holdings about the proposal. We have been made aware of a number of impacts, which are highlighted in our submission. We are aware that there would be, if this were to go ahead, a reduction in forest area of around 500 hectares and some volume implications of about 8,000 cubic metres of harvest volume per year. The project proponents have given a commitment to Timber Queensland that there would be no net forestry loss in terms of those volumes. They have committed to a land offset for matched replanting. Based on those principles, we have no objections. One issue we did discuss was fire hazard. As an industry, we are very concerned about fire management. Again, there was a commitment from the proponents to work with HQPlantations around fire management and safety capability. In summary, we have no objection at this stage, provided those commitments are made. Additionally, it is important for the primacy of plantation land use to remain. If a wind farm can co-exist with the forest industry then we have no objection.

CHAIR: Mr Stephens, you mentioned not only in your submission but also in your statement today about the commitment of Forest Wind Holdings to no net loss of forestry production. You also talked about the arrangements for fire hazards and operational impacts. Why is that so important?

Mr Stephens: As I said, in terms of growing our industry we have had challenges around land costs for new plantations. It is very important to rely on our existing plantation base and add value to that through improved productivity or management of those areas going forward. If we were to lose plantation area, it would be a direct hit on the industry. The commitment from the proponent that they would match those areas is very important for us because there are difficulties around new plantation investment, given land costs in particular. You have high up-front costs with a long time period before you have the returns. We are working with governments around incentives around carbon offsets, for example, and getting better market access for plantations, because they can provide carbon sequestration and provide an extra incentive. We are dealing with some market access issues around that.

Fire is obviously a big one. We are always very concerned about fire management across the landscape, and that is across all tenures. Things like fuel reduction burning and having the capability to deal with fires are critical. With wind farms on the estate, there are concerns around those activities on the plantation in that you may increase fire risk with machinery and all sorts of things, so a commitment around having better fire management capability from the proponent or an arrangement

with HQPlantations for us is critical to be able to detect those fires early and manage the risks so that we do not lose that broader estate. Fire for us would probably be the bigger threat than the immediate reduction in the area from the clearing.

Mr KRAUSE: I have a question for HQPlantations which relates to the issue of fire protection. You mentioned that there was 25,000 hectares per annum of prescribed burning undertaken. Have you had any discussions or are you satisfied with the plans that are going to be put in place with the proponent to enable that hazard reduction to continue throughout both the construction phase and the operational phase?

Mr Robertson: The short answer is that we have had extensive conversations with Forest Wind because, as Mick indicated, it is probably the most significant issue for us. We have, if you like, agreed a set of principles to date on how fire will be managed and we will be preparing with them a detailed fire management plan process. It will cover aspects like fire protection or fuel management zones around each turbine, a hard stand area in the immediate vicinity of the turbine and then regular reduction of fine fuels which survive. Forest Wind will have staff on site all of the time and they will assist us with protection activities and a whole range of things. We do not envisage that our fuel reduction burning program will be impacted by the turbines. If we need to close a few turbines down so that we can conduct fuel reduction burns, that is called an eligible outage and we have agreed that that is in their best interests and ours. We are pretty comfortable on the fire front. I will also flag that if you go back 10 or 15 years the technology with turbines was a lot different to what it is today and historically there were fires that had been initiated by turbines, but as the technology has developed there are a lot of safety mechanisms in place now and we are comfortable that we do not consider the turbines a fire risk for our business.

Mr KRAUSE: I have a second question, Chair.

CHAIR: Yes. We are up against time, so I will ask you to keep it concise and the responses concise.

Mr KRAUSE: I will.

CHAIR: I want to give other members a chance as well.

Mr KRAUSE: I have a question for Timber Queensland. I want to know if you could tell the committee whether the government has identified land where the offset of trees will be planted and also who will be funding the matched plantings for the offset area.

Mr Stephens: They are good questions. At the moment all we have is an in-principle undertaking from the proponent that there would be no net loss in the area and in the volume. There was a commitment for Timber Queensland to remain informed as a key stakeholder about those arrangements. That is probably going to be a commercial arrangement between HQP or the government. We are a key industry stakeholder but we do not have skin in the game in terms of the resource. The short answer is that we only know that in general details.

Mr KRAUSE: Can HQPlantations add anything to that?

Mr Robertson: We have had conversations with Forest Wind regarding land offsets. While we have identified that there are areas in the vicinity of those plantations, we have not progressed that any further and the ball really is with Forest Wind to source that land for us to re-establish and maintain productivity.

Ms BOLTON: Both of you have spoken about the proponent's commitments. Are you both satisfied that the government has mechanisms to ensure those commitments are adhered to?

Mr Robertson: The legislation, if you like, is a first step to getting the wind farm in place and there will be a number of commercial and contractual arrangements put in place between the state, HQPlantations and Forest Wind and between Forest Wind and ourselves. There have been a lot of discussions to start that off and we have agreed on many principles, but those agreements are not yet finalised or in place really pending the legislation. We are confident that we will find agreement on all matters with the state and Forest Wind Holdings.

CHAIR: The time for this session has expired. Thank you, Mr Robertson and Mr Stephens, for joining us today. We really appreciate your contribution.

LAMPREY, Mr Rodney, Private capacity (via teleconference)

LAMPREY, Ms Vicki, Private capacity (via teleconference)

OLSEN, Ms Christine, Private capacity (via teleconference)

OLSEN, Mr Lester, Private capacity (via teleconference)

CHAIR: Welcome. I invite you to make an opening statement, if you like, and then we will move to questions. We will take your submission as read, but I invite you to make an opening statement.

Mr Lamprey: Yes, definitely. My complaint is regarding the Forest Wind wind farm. I have made a detailed submission, which I think you all have and have read.

CHAIR: Yes, we have.

Mr Lamprey: We are seeking ideally no wind farm but some compensation as far as the placement and offset of the turbines. In my submission I have detailed quite a few recent studies, even though they are not within what the state act actually says, which was made in 2014 I believe. One would be the example from Finland, where their research and study have shown that the infrasound will penetrate up to 15 kilometres away from the turbines. Given our location of approximately 3.2 kilometres from the closest turbine, we have grave reservations and concerns for our potential health risks.

Furthermore, there is a lot more research which I have detailed—and I do not really need to go too far into that—but we are hoping that we can negotiate with CleanSight. As James has indicated before, we have to get along harmoniously between the communities of Maaroom, Tuan and Boonooroo, which are the closest communities to where the proposed development will be. Given that there is nearly 200 square kilometres of land or forest which the wind farm will be situated in, I would not see it as unreasonable that we could get somewhere between a five- and 10-kilometre setback from these communities.

I have been in consultation with James and Jane from CleanSight and they have indicated that they are prepared to sit down and negotiate with us. Unfortunately, we have not had a process to do that as yet. We have gone through the wind farm commissioner complaints system and now we find we are back here with you, but I have had consultations with our local member, Mr Bruce Saunders, and he has indicated that he is happy to go through those negotiation processes with us. As I said initially, I am representing another 30 members of my community. We have not vehemently gone out and lobbied our local community, but these are friends and neighbours whom I am representing. I have detailed six concerns we have. The primary one—

CHAIR: Rodney, I will get you to wind up so that we have time for the other statements.

Mr Lamprey: Okay. All we are seeking is that we can have a further offset than the three kilometres which is proposed. I would not think it is reasonable, in a 200-square-kilometre area, that the turbines have to be so close to our properties and I would hope that the committee would take this on board. We do not want to be collateral damage. The power which is generated is great for Queensland, but none of that power is coming directly into the Wide Bay community itself.

CHAIR: Thanks, Rodney and Vicki. Lester and Christine, I invite either one of you to make a brief opening statement.

Ms Olsen: Thank you. Good morning. The problem is that the benefits of so-called clean energy are offset by the impact it has on the environment and local communities. The sheer size and scale of Forest Wind's proposal should ring alarm bells. It will be amongst the largest onshore installation in the world. The Forest Wind proposal is completely without precedence so far in Australia. It is breaking new ground on two significant fronts: its massive scale and the sensitivity of the proposed site. First, the proposal is on an industrial scale. It will have three times the output of the biggest wind farm in Queensland—Coopers Gap—with nearly twice as many turbines. Each tower could be 245 metres high—the height of the Eiffel Tower is just under 300 metres. The turbine would create a barrier of 14 kilometres wide and 40 kilometres long. That is over five times the area covered by Coopers Gap.

Secondly, the location is enormously sensitive. I have provided handout maps if you would look at them, please. There are over 900 homes in the coastal communities within five kilometres. The site occupies the heart of the Australian nominated UNESCO Great Sandy Biosphere. It is an outstanding area of beauty. It is in the immediate vicinity of the Fraser Island World Heritage site; adjacent to Poona National Park; in the vicinity of the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar wetlands and directly

on recognised bird, bat and insect migration routes; and, in particular, is adjacent to the potentially internationally recognised East Asian-Australasian flyway for our migrating shorebirds. It includes environmentally sensitive areas and matters of state environmental significance. It contains many bird and bat species of ecological significance: two threatened bat species and 23 threatened bird species potentially occur, and four species of bird conservation significance were actually recorded by the limited surveys carried out.

Because this project is breaking new ground, because it is massive in scale and because of its ecological sensitivity, the bar for public consultation and for ecological concerns should be raised proportionately higher than for any previous projects. That means both local consultation and ecological research should be on an unprecedented massive scale compared with previous projects on grazing land.

CHAIR: I would ask you to wind up and conclude, please, so we have time for questions. Thank you.

Ms Olsen: For protection of community, state code 23 as detailed should have been consulted from the outset. We heard of it at least three years after; it was kept secret from 2016 until the public announcement in December 2019. Our community in Boonooroo was told on 20 January by letterbox drop. It is a travesty of the democratic process. I accept that the federal and state governments are committed to renewable energy policy, but the short-term aspiration of political policy should be tempered by sound, practical, scientific sense. To put it simply, to damage or destroy any part of ecology to achieve green energy is absurd and counterproductive. We are destroying the very thing we are trying to protect: the environment. Just as important is the rush to reach energy targets by cutting red tape. The outcome of this proposal will create a precedent for future projects in Australia. Once you destroy the environment, you cannot get it back. It will be gone forever.

I implore you: we are not just talking about a bill to allow you to cut down a few pine trees for wind turbines; we are talking about destroying a highly sensitive ecosystem all for the sake of green energy. Please read my detailed submission and I thank you for your time.

Mrs MULLEN: You have both raised the issue of wanting to have further and more extensive public consultation and community consultation by Forest Wind. In an ideal world, what would that consultation look like for you?

Ms Olsen: From my point of view, I cannot Zoom as I have an old computer. I would like to meet face-to-face in Boonooroo Hall, right at the heart of our little community.

Mr Lamprey: Similarly, I would like to have some face-to-face consultation. I would also like some delegates from the state government to act on our behalf or help moderate or mediate how we are going to move forward with this. I think a lot of the replies from the developer have been generic. As I have said before, I do not think it is too unreasonable that the community is taken into consideration and we have some input into the location of these wind farm turbines.

Mr BOOTHMAN: You were talking about the environmental impacts of this new wind farm. Can you elaborate on your concerns about the movement of birds in the area and fauna patterns? You mentioned this in your statement and also in the information you sent to the committee. Can you elaborate on what types of migration pathways are located in this area? Can you supply any information on that?

Ms Olsen: I am sorry; the link is very poor. Are you talking about the migratory birds?

Mr BOOTHMAN: Yes, and local habitats of local bird species that actually live in the area.

Ms Olsen: Certainly. The Queensland government put out a Parks and Forests Department of Environment and Science study that showed that 30,000 shorebirds migrate onto the Great Sandy Strait between September and March each year. It is very specific wetlands here and it is covered by international importance under the Ramsar conservation act. What they call fens is where the shorebirds come and feed. There is no subtropical fens like those between Fraser Island and Boonooroo, the little coastline where I live; there is none like them in the world. It is a rare area because of the tides and how the mud and the sandbanks build up. There are 30,000 birds that migrate here yearly. You are asking them to navigate wind turbines. They would be within three kilometres of the foreshore. By law, I understood it was to be five kilometres from any Ramsar wetland.

Ms BOLTON: You mentioned, as did Rodney, the five kilometres. Do you believe that the impacts would be a lot less if that five-kilometre distance from the coast for the migratory birds was implemented? Would that actually address or at least improve the situation?

Ms Olsen: I would like to think so, but this is a massive scale and no-one will know. It will be too late if the turbines are put in place and they do kill birds. I have been in touch with Forest Wind and they will be doing a body count of dead animals; there will be someone actually picking up the dead animals. If there are too many dead animals around the turbines—birds and bats—they will reduce the speed of the turbine so there would be less risk of collision. I think it is counterproductive for a wind farm to be reducing the speed of the turbine, so I think the area is very unsuitable.

Migratory birds island hop. They do not just fly across the sea to come here; they island hop, and they do need to rest on land. The turbines are so high—245 metres high—with blades of 70 metres that will be rotating day and night. How can they navigate them?

Ms BOLTON: Just to clarify, you are saying that you do not believe the five-kilometre distance would make any difference?

Ms Olsen: I would say that this site for this wind firm is grossly negligent; it is not suitable at all.

Mr KRAUSE: Apart from the letterbox information flyer, have you had any face-to-face consultation with either the department or the proponent of this?

Ms Olsen: We both met James Pennay and his group in the Poona Hall in February. My husband and I attended for one hour and 45 minutes—for the entire session. We walked in. There were people just standing around. We were not really sure who they were. There were A4 pieces of paper spread out all over the desk and it was left to us to grab the paper, work it out and hand them out to each other. We said, 'Have you read this? Have you seen this? We can put in an opinion on why the wind farm should be here and put in our concerns.'

What horrified me most was the map that was put up. It had the wind farm photo imposed on the site map. Eckert Road is just three minutes walk from the front of my house. We could stand in Eckert Road at the community hall, look across to Tuan and see wind turbines. I came to live here to look across the water to see Fraser Island and to watch and listen to the birds, not to listen to or see wind turbines. When I drive to town they will be on my left on the Maryborough road. It is a one-entry road. When I drive to Tin Can Bay, they will be on my right, also a one-entry road. If I go out in my boat to Fraser Island—that is why we retired here: we can do a day trip to Fraser Island—coming back to land I will see wind turbines.

Mr KRAUSE: Just quickly, is that the only session you have had?

Ms Olsen: I have had emails from Mr Pennay regarding my concerns. He responded after I complained to the Wind Farm Commissioner and tried to negotiate some of the issues that I had raised. There was a meeting on Saturday. It was a Zoom conference meeting. As I said, I am on the phone to you this morning. My computer is old. I cannot Zoom, so I could not attend the Zoom conference.

CHAIR: Thank you, Christine. We will give Rodney a quick chance to speak and then we will finish because we are against time.

Mr Lamprey: I have had a couple of phone conversations with both Jane and James. We were looking at doing some audio background noise levels adjacent to my property, because they had assumed we were living in suburbia with a 45-decibel background noise. Fortunately, we do not have that; we have cane toads and wild birds. It is a very native and natural environment here. Unfortunately, with the COVID scare, that proposed audio check has been postponed.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for your contributions today. It is much appreciated by the committee.

Mr Lamprey: Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to hearing back from you in the future.

GERHARD, Mr Will, Senior Adviser, Gympie Futures, Gympie Regional Council (via videoconference)[1]

CHAIR: Mr Gerhard, I welcome you. We will take your submission as read, but we will give you an opportunity to make a brief opening statement if you so wish.

Mr Gerhard: Thank you for the opportunity for Gympie Regional Council to put in support this morning with regard to our submission for the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill 2020. In broad terms, Gympie Regional Council supports the intent of the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill 2020. As a matter of background, council's submission focused on the economic and renewable energy opportunities for the Wide Bay region, in particular here in Gympie and the Gympie region.

For your information, GRC provided a planning submission that was made at the time of the assessment of the application with the state. That was just another submission that was made in the earlier stage with regard to planning. Over recent years the Wide Bay region has been through difficulty and change due to natural circumstances and some unforeseen circumstances. Flood, fire, drought and the current condition with the COVID-19 crisis have seen the region look at more sustainable economic opportunities towards future regional growth.

The Forest Wind farm development project is seen as an important economic investment for the Gympie region and more widely throughout the Wide Bay-Burnett region. The region is set to benefit from potentially a $2 billion project delivered right here in the region. Benefits include improved economic and employment outcomes from working with our First Nation people and our local communities; the number of new construction jobs and ongoing jobs for our local community; local businesses being suppliers to the project and building and growing their businesses; upskilling the local workforce in renewable technologies; working in partnership with large multinational companies—in this instance, Siemens; and placing the region on the world stage in renewable energy technologies.

It is acknowledged that the Forest Wind farm project can potentially secure around 50 per cent of the state's energy target and renewable energy target and potentially provide energy to 25 per cent of Queensland homes. The project supports Gympie Regional Council's renewable energy and carbon energy policy and draft economic development and investment position. With this in mind, it would be great to see some benefit flow to the Wide Bay region—and Gympie and Maryborough communities in particular—from the downward pressure on energy prices.

The Gympie Regional Council looks forward to the future opportunities through the proposed Forest Wind farm development project. Thank you all for the opportunity to provide our in-principle support to the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill 2020.

CHAIR: Thank you for your opening statement and also for your council's submission. We will now move to questions. Mr Gerhard, you talked about the extensive economic benefits of this bill to the Gympie region in particular. You gave a detailed statement in relation to that. Clearly there are some extensive benefits there. In your submission you talked about the opportunity to host renewable energy tours which will attract visitors to the region. Could you give us some further detail in relation to that?

Mr Gerhard: Our tourism sector has taken a huge hit, as you can imagine, like most of Queensland in recent times. This is an opportunity. There are people who are keen to see wind farms. We have been out to other wind farm projects to have a look. If people are coming all the way out here, they will likely stay overnight and therefore assist our accommodation facilities. The opportunity is there to use our other tourism assets in the region—the Mary Valley and so forth. We feel there is an opportunity there. It is a matter of how that opportunity is best provided to engage people.

Mr KRAUSE: I have a question in relation to the commitment by the proponent to fully offset for trees lost during the building process. Has there been any discussion with the Gympie Regional Council or Gympie Futures about the location of those offsets? Is there any talk about cooperation?

Mr Gerhard: To date nothing has progressed in that area as such. We await further discussion with CleanSight and other proponents in regard to that—so at this stage no.

[1] Comments not endorsed by Gympie Regional Council. See correspondence from Mayor Hartwick, dated 10 July 2020 - https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/committees/SDTIMC/2020/ForestWindFarmDB20/cor-10Jul2020.pdf

Mrs MULLEN: You spoke about the potential benefit for local businesses from this project. Is that something you have had discussions with Forest Wind about already, or is that something that you are proposing to do going forward? What arrangements would you be looking to make as a council to ensure that local businesses are getting the benefits from a project like this?

Mr Gerhard: There has been a considerable amount of discussion with Forest Wind around engaging local businesses as tier 3 and 4 suppliers to the project. This has been cultivated recently through a number of online forums for our local businesses to engage in and also the introduction of the ICN, which is the Industry Capability Network. Businesses can register their interest online. When the respective projects come about, they will be informed and they can make a pitch or a play for those projects. The answer is yes. We have been heavily involved with CleanSight in getting the messages out to our local businesses to engage them in the project.

Ms BOLTON: I am not sure whether you were online and heard some of the community representatives and their concerns regarding migratory birds et cetera. Have those concerns been brought to council? In response, has that been brought up with the relevant agencies through the development assessment process?

Mr Gerhard: To be honest, I am not totally clear on those responses coming to council. I am not in a position to comment on that. I can take that on board and try to get some information from our respective council departments on that. To my knowledge to date, I have not or particularly the Gympie Futures team, which is the economic development side of things, has not come across those sorts of concerns by the community.

Ms BOLTON: Could we make that a question on notice?

CHAIR: We will place that question on notice. Mr Gerhard, if you have any further information, could you give it to us by 10 am on Monday, 22 June?

Mr Gerhard: Yes, absolutely.

Mr BOOTHMAN: My question is about the destruction of the natural amenity of the area, especially when it comes to the Eiffel Tower sized turbines. What are the council's thoughts on that issue?

Mr Gerhard: We had CleanSight present to council recently. There was not anything specific to that. It was more around the connection lines to the main power grid in regard to Woolooga power station or grid station that we have here. There was not any particular general discussion around the size of the towers themselves. I guess the enormity of them is quite significant. The council itself was not particularly discussing that line of thought at the time. That is my response to you: I do not have that information.

CHAIR: We have time for one last question if any committee member has one. You must have done a comprehensive job, Mr Gerhard. Thank you for your submission and for your time today. It was much appreciated.

Mr Gerhard: I appreciate the opportunity. Thank you.

DANIELS, Ms Jane, Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Forest Wind Holdings

PENNAY, Mr James, Project Director, Forest Wind Project, Forest Wind Holdings

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Pennay and Ms Daniels, for joining us today. You have obviously been observing proceedings, so I will give you a chance to make an opening statement and then we will move to questions.

Mr Pennay: I appreciate the opportunity to be here today. My name is James Pennay. I am the project director and representative for Forest Wind Holdings. Joining me today is Jane Daniels, who is our stakeholder engagement manager, who will be happy to address some of the concerns raised.

Forest Wind Holdings is a joint venture between Siemens Financial Services and CleanSight. Siemens is a well-known global energy investment technology developer, manufacturer and constructor of projects. They joined Forest Wind Holdings late last year. We are from CleanSight, who are the other 50 per cent partner within Forest Wind Holdings. We are a local Sunshine Coast business. We are very pleased to have had Siemens Financial Services come and invest in Queensland.

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today. I especially acknowledge the traditional owners of the area where this project is proposed, being the Kabi Kabi people and the Butchulla First Nation people. We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging, and we extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today.

This is a significant day in the development of this project. We are very proud to be here. We will walk you through the bill and the purpose of the bill, and we are happy to respond to questions from the other attendees at the hearing today.

Our proposal is to develop, construct and operate a wind farm of up to 1,200 megawatts. It is a transformative energy infrastructure project utilising human and material resources of Queensland and in particular the Wide Bay region. It will generate up to $2 billion of investment and create 440 full-time jobs during construction, peaking at over 600 jobs. With 50 direct long-term roles which will largely be in Wide Bay, we have the opportunity to offset the emissions of one million cars each year.

It is a next-generation resource project for Queensland. It will need significant mineral resources for foundations—for example, sand, hard aggregates, cement. It will use Queensland's human resources. We are already developing a team. We have a significant team now and we will continue to develop Queensland human resources as we take this project forward. We are looking to use Queensland's wind resources. They blow in from the Pacific Ocean. They are free. They are clean. They are infinite. They are renewable. Importantly, they complement the demand profile in our electricity network. That is the key point to commercialising this project.

The Forest Wind Farm Development Bill 2020 is an outcome of an extensive process of working with the state government through the investment facilitation initiative. It is a significant achievement which demonstrates the private sector working with and collaborating with state government departments to facilitate a private sector-led project that can deliver great benefits to Queensland and Wide Bay.

Queensland has been a global leader in identifying and facilitating the access of Queensland's resources. Our economy has thrived through a range of Queensland governments over time putting in place enabling instruments—the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the Electricity Act 1994. Coal, minerals, gas, petroleum and resource companies have access to a range of resource authority pathways that allow them to obtain secure financeable tenure, permits, development licences, mining and petroleum leases, and easements for distribution and transmission lines. These instruments, coupled with the Forestry Act 1959, have allowed the delivery of Queensland resource projects within the state forests for which the plantation licences apply.

The Forestry Act was created in the fifties. It does protect Queensland forest industries which is important. However, it does not contemplate new resources that can be complementary, co-located and not affecting forestry. Under the investment facilitation initiative, we have explored with the state government departments avenues and options to co-locate a wind farm on state forest land subject to a plantation licence as well as subject to native title parties' rights and interests. I would like to acknowledge and thank the hard work of the departments in reaching this point today. The legislation is a critical enabler for Forest Wind providing conditional land access and tenure through access licences and leases. This is necessary to commercialise and finance this particular resource project.

The development is advancing. We are undertaking community consultation, and I am happy to talk about that more in a minute. We are progressing site design and procurement, engaging with local contractors and suppliers. We are working closely with our engineering procurement and construction partner Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy.

The Forest Wind Farm Development Bill 2020 is essential in advancing Forest Wind to the next stage of its development. Certainly a land tenure pathway and legal framework to support land access will underpin commercialisation, enabling completion of procurement with a strong emphasis on local and traditional owner content. Forest Wind is a next-generation Queensland resource project. It can drive jobs and investment and suppress wholesale electricity prices. It will give Queensland industry more competitive electricity prices so they can compete nationally and provide electricity prices that allow our industries to remain competitive internationally. Today I would like to submit to the committee Forest Wind Holdings' full support for the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for your submission and also your opening statement. We will now move on to questions. You have had the benefit of listening to the submitters so far and we have heard about the economic benefits and obviously the jobs that it will bring to the region and potential tourism. We have heard about the benefits in terms of renewable energy and the commitment there as well. There have been a couple of concerns raised. Summarising them, they relate to the consultation process, the exclusion zone and the environmental impacts of the project. I was just wondering if you could respond to those concerns raised.

Mr Pennay: If I can perhaps set the context and then come on to the community consultation process.

CHAIR: Sure.

Mr Pennay: As a company that develops wind farms, we do so in regulated environments all the time. Queensland has led the way in Australia in developing state code 23. It is a code that was introduced in 2016, developed after significant consultation—at least 18 months—which involved engagement with local communities, local councils in particular who used to have responsibility for planning, and looking at international best practice. That state code that was developed included constraints within which a developer must operate. In doing so, that made it very clear what we would need to do in designing and developing this project to comply with the code. That is very useful, but we also need to consider beyond the code: where are we, what are the communities around us, what are the environmental aspects. We are pleased to have complied with the code and received the development approval in February, but we went over and beyond the code. Traditionally, on projects we have worked on we have been around 700 metres from homes. The code required 1,500 metres from homes. We doubled 1,500 to three kilometres. We are at least 3,000 metres from homes as we have the site designed today for the purpose of the development application.

We remain open to working with people like Rodney to understand their concerns and look at our overall planning envelope. We have to look at how we can best optimise this site. There are a range of views in the community, of course, and there are a range of technical, environmental and commercial factors that we need to consider. We also need to consider the views of the plantation and the state government as key land stakeholders where they may or may not want turbines, likewise the traditional owners. That is the context of how we have developed it to date. It is not to say it is a final design. We continue to design it. I will hand to Jane to talk through the community consultation process.

Ms Daniels: Thank you. Forest Wind knows that community engagement and consultation are important to successfully build a social licence to operate and build support for a project. It is certainly a key objective of ours now as we proceed through the remaining development stages of the project. Given the complexity and unique circumstances of the key stakeholders on the proposed site and the need to build confidence in the proposal with these stakeholders, we did actually have to adjust our consultation and community engagement program for these circumstances. At the request of a number of key stakeholders, a formal announcement occurred once we were able to demonstrate the commercial, technical and legal feasibility of the project so that we did not raise community expectations about the viability of the project and that community expectations were not raised prematurely. There is still a process to go in our consultation program before the construction commences, so there is ample opportunity for community to have their say and for us to address their concerns.

Since the project was announced in December last year—obviously Christmas also occurred at that time so it has an impact in the way that consultation activities can occur—we hand-delivered letters directly to more highly impacted residents; we launched our project website, which has now

seen over 10,000 unique visitors; and we have sent information packs to over 900 residential and postal addresses within five kilometres of the site inviting them to community information sessions and providing some general information about the project. At those three community information sessions that we held in three locations around the site we had over 200 people attend. The majority of those who attended those sessions, where we collected feedback forms, were in support of the project.

We posted updates to residents on 10 March. We have carried out various media interviews with newspapers and television. We did have a plan to visit the Coopers Gap Wind Farm with community. Unfortunately, we had to postpone that due to COVID-19. Obviously, our program for community consultation has been impacted by COVID-19. On the weekend we hosted an online session where only 17 people attended. At online sessions for people who are wanting to understand the business opportunities we have had 700 people participate. We have also met with local councils and regularly provided them updates. We have briefed local members of state parliament and we have briefed local high school principals and deputy principals, who are eager to participate in the skills and vocational training development for the project, to identify what career pathways there are and just to inspire the kids who are at their schools who are in areas of high youth unemployment. Of course, we have undertaken regular engagement and consultation with the First Nation Kabi Kabi and Butchulla people and have engaged with environment and local chambers of commerce.

Our indication is that there is strong support for the project. We will continue to work with community members like Rodney and Christine to address their concerns. Rodney mentioned that he would like to have a mechanism to drive that engagement. Over the last six weeks we have been calling for nominations for a Forest Wind community consultative committee. That is the mechanism through which we would like to be receiving and managing that consultation process. We have received a number of nominations for those positions and we intend to establish that committee in the next month. I just wanted to finish by saying that the consultation process is ongoing and we want to build strong support with the community, because we wholly believe that this project is a great thing for Wide Bay, of which we are local constituents.

CHAIR: You have set out a really extensive consultation process. Just to be clear, if this bill is passed the consultation process will not stop? It will continue on?

Ms Daniels: This bill relates to the tenure for the project but the project is ongoing. The development of the project is ongoing so the avenues for consultation very much remain open.

Mr KRAUSE: Mr Pennay, there is a lease agreement between the state and Forest Wind in relation to this project; is that correct?

Mr Pennay: Not as yet.

Mr KRAUSE: There will be?

Mr Pennay: In accordance with the bill, there is the process of obtaining the access licence and then lease agreement once constructed.

Mr KRAUSE: Is there a copy of a draft lease agreement floating around at all? Do you have one here with you today?

Mr Pennay: No, we do not have a copy of a state proposed lease.

Mr KRAUSE: Will that lease and agreement when it is finalised be made public?

Mr Pennay: I am not entirely familiar with whether the state will make a lease public. I would expect, as with other resource projects, it would be in accordance with whatever that protocol is.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, I caution you. You are straying into hypothetical questions.

Mr KRAUSE: Not at all. That is a yes or no question. Obviously Forest Wind is a party to the lease and I wondered if you will be making it public.

CHAIR: I am going to rule that question out of order. There is actually no lease in existence. You have heard that, Deputy Chair. You are asking a clearly hypothetical question.

Mr KRAUSE: Another question then: will Forest Wind guarantee at the end of the project—I know it has a certain lifespan—the cost of decommissioning the wind farm in its entirety?

Mr Pennay: Not in its entirety. We are intending to spend $20 million, $30 million, $40 million on infrastructure within the forest. That includes roads, bridges, culverts and entrances to and exits from state controlled roads. For example, those pieces of infrastructure will be for the benefit of the state as the landowner. The plantation licensee will be a beneficiary, as will the contractors that work within the forest. We do not expect those pieces of infrastructure to be decommissioned; however,

the turbine towers will certainly be taken down. The state has great experience in dealing with resource projects and from that experience I think the state will require appropriate securities to ensure that the infrastructure that will be taken away is taken away and the state is confident that will occur.

Mr KRAUSE: What is the estimated cost of doing that?

Mr Pennay: The estimated cost is something that we are working on. It is something that is very hard to predict in 30-plus years today. We have indicative budget numbers at the moment.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, I am going to give other committee members an opportunity to ask questions. You have had a good go.

Mrs MULLEN: You spoke about the project's focus on local and also traditional owner content. Are you able to provide some further advice on how you are currently doing that and how you intend to continue to do that going forward?

Ms Daniels: Over the last six weeks we have been working closely with Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy, which is our turbine supplier, and the engineering procurement and construction contractor and with the ICN Gateway. The benefit of having an early partnership identified with our turbine supplier is that we can do extensive early supplier engagement. Again, given COVID-19 restrictions, we have not been able to host typically in-person events, but we have held three online supplier information sessions where we are providing a detailed overview of the project, the procurement process and, importantly, an expression of interest phase where we are actively encouraging all local businesses, no matter if you are the water haulage truck, the pest management provider, a local accommodation provider or a caravan park. They are all registering to participate in these sessions and then put an expression of interest in. We have another session planned this Wednesday. We already have over 60 people registered to attend that event.

We will also be working closely with local businesses and providing support for them to improve their business profiles on ICN Gateway and hosting meet-the-buyer sessions once we advance to the procurement stage. We will also be doing, in parallel, more targeted programs with the First Nation people, Kabi Kabi and Butchulla, and be working extensively with them to be not only getting their businesses partnered up with other contractors in the supply chain but also looking at an extensive skills development program that we are looking to develop. I am really looking forward to that element of the project. The support from local businesses has been really quite overwhelming and we are really encouraged on how they are going to participate in this project.

Mrs MULLEN: One of the challenges with consultation is that at some point you reach a point at which you just do not reach agreement with some people. You get to a point where you are not going to satisfy all of their concerns, but will you continue to provide information as you go forward on what you are doing for those residents who I guess are going to continue to not always be very happy with the project? Will there be some kind of process in which they can continue to be engaged with what is actually happening on site as you develop this project?

Ms Daniels: I think our objectives over these next six months are to really build understanding of the project and every element of the project. Christine has raised a lot of concerns around the environment, and so has Rodney, and there are concerns. Another submission that was made to the committee was from the Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council. They have experts in their group who have studied our documents and our reports and have nominated to be on our consultative committee. They hold us to account in what we are saying in what studies we have put forward. Our job is to inform and bring up to speed so we can understand what the impacts are of the project.

We can talk a little bit more about the environmental impacts, but they are all within our development application. The comprehensive studies that were done as part of our development application were assessed by third-party experts. They were assessed as being compliant with the state development wind farm code. As I said, we want to establish the consultative committee as a means through which community members can approach committee members. It will have an independent chair so we can set up constructive engagement. There may be people who never like the wind farm, but, again, we point back to the fact that the state has a regulatory framework through the state wind farm development code that enables us to proceed with our development with the confidence that we have met the statutory regulatory requirements that the Queensland government has set.

Ms BOLTON: Ms Daniels, obviously the Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council will sit on that consultative committee. In terms of the concerns that Christine raised regarding migratory birds, will they will be working on that to obtain further information globally about the impacts? Obviously, we have heard a lot regarding the impacts and ways in which to mitigate those.

Ms Daniels: Yes, indeed. A key focus is to bring in independent experts so that they are not just relying on us as proponents saying these things. We can bring in independent experts who can look at the data that we have collected and also the data that has been collected by the state departments over a long period of time and assess how the project will or will not impact upon those migratory birds. So far, our assessment shows that migratory birds do not fly over the site, because it is an exotic pine plantation and does not have a food source. The migratory birds have not been observed flying over the plantation, which is set back from the Ramsar wetland area that Christine mentioned.

Ms BOLTON: Can anyone apply to the community consultative committee?

Ms Daniels: Yes, indeed.

Ms BOLTON: Queenslanders have looked to renewables as not only a better source but also a cheaper source of electricity. Mr Pennay, you mentioned suppressing prices but not necessarily that electricity will be any cheaper. Can you expand on that, because I think that is what Queenslanders are very much thinking?

Mr Pennay: Sure. I guess the context is that there is now around 600,000 megawatts of wind farms globally. That demonstrates that it is a low-cost energy source and the technology has continued to develop. In terms of competitive marketplaces, our businesses need to compete with other countries that have these low-cost sources. The nature of the wind profile in this instance does generate at times that prices are high. When you put in up to 1,200 megawatts, it will push down the prices during those periods. That has been seen with solar in the market. So much solar has come on that prices have been suppressed in the middle of the day. As a consequence, we believe that this project can lower the cost of energy and deliver more competitive electricity prices to Queensland businesses and also residents.

Ms BOLTON: Even though unrelated to this bill—because that is the question on everyone's lips—what is the mechanism to capture, and how long can you continue providing power when the wind is not blowing?

Mr Pennay: We have a very complex and large electricity network. Queensland forms part of the national electricity network, which extends all the way down to the bottom part of South Australia and Tasmania. An electron produced in Queensland can go to South Australia and, likewise, an electron from South Australia can come here. We have a system that has constantly varying demand and varying generation sources, types and costs. That is regulated by the Australian Energy Market Operator to ensure there is sufficient capacity and sufficient energy delivered to meet the demand. That is the framework that we need to operate in. Queensland does have great peaking capacity such as the Wivenhoe hydro plant, which has 500 megawatts for example. We also have gas peaking plants which have the capacity to respond when there is a need for generation.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Obviously there are some concerns from residents. I want to specifically talk about the sound generated from these wind turbines. Obviously they are a very large turbine. What is the potential impact on residential properties in closest proximity to the turbines?

Mr Pennay: Although they are larger, wind turbines are no louder than they ever have been. I have worked on projects where we have been 700 metres from houses. We are looking at three-plus kilometres. We do not see noise as being an issue. We have undertaken quite a considerable assessment of noise by a third-party independent consultant. That has also been assessed by the state under the planning process for which they engaged a third-party professional to consider noise. The application was approved. There are a range of conditions attached to that application that the project must meet. We have no concerns in meeting those.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Would any of the residential properties within that distance of 3.2 kilometres have a line of sight to these turbines?

Mr Pennay: Some will, yes.

Ms Daniels: A landscape study was also done.

CHAIR: We heard from the Gympie council about the economic benefits of the project. Obviously they are really excited, because it is green jobs in regional communities, many of which have higher unemployment than the south-east corner. Can you expand on those economic benefits, particularly the jobs that will be created by the project?

Mr Pennay: As a starting point, at the moment probably around 20 people in our region are working on the project. Once we get to construction it could be up to 440 full-time jobs, peaking at 600 jobs during construction, and up to 50 full-time operational roles for a 1,200-megawatt project. Eighty per cent of the jobs created during construction are expected to be in Queensland.

Approximately half of the jobs created during construction we expect to be filled by people in the Wide Bay region. During the operational phase, we would expect around 90 per cent of those people to be in the Wide Bay, Gympie and Maryborough area.

CHAIR: Fantastic.

Mr KRAUSE: Mr Pennay, in relation to decommissioning, which we spoke about before, will Forest Wind be providing any financial assurance to the state in order to back up the decommissioning obligations?

Mr Pennay: We expect that the state will require financial securities in relation to decommissioning, the details of which we have not resolved yet. Yes, we expect that the state will require that.

Mr KRAUSE: You do not know how much yet?

Mr Pennay: No. The first step is to resolve that we have a land tenure pathway and then the land agreements.

Mr KRAUSE: Will the turbines be visible from Fraser Island?

Mr Pennay: From the southern tip of Fraser Island, where it is exposed, they will be visible. Up the west coast of Fraser Island it is impenetrable. It is mangroves and it is very difficult to get through that area. It is very difficult to see through that area. Broadly in the region, there is a thick canopy of trees just about everywhere. It is quite difficult to see the project.

Mr KRAUSE: Do landholders who have transmission lines going by their place have a right of appeal in relation to that?

Mr Pennay: The transmission line easements will be resolved through direct private negotiations with those landowners. There is no form of compulsory acquisition that would lead to an appeal. We need to come to an arrangement with those landowners. Otherwise, we will need to go next door.

Mr KRAUSE: Next door to the government or next door to the neighbour?

Mr Pennay: We will have to come to an arrangement with each landowner.

Mr KRAUSE: You do not expect there to be any compulsion on the part of any landholders in terms of transmission lines?

Mr Pennay: No, we do not have any compulsory acquisition powers.

CHAIR: The time for this session has expired. Thank you, Mr Pennay and Ms Daniels, for your time today.

Proceedings suspended from 11.10 am to 11.26 am.

FYNES-CLINTON, Mr Stephen, Legal Representative, Cherish Enterprises Pty Ltd

LIN, Mr Johnson, Project Manager, Cherish Enterprises Pty Ltd

CHAIR: I welcome our friends from Cherish Enterprises Pty Ltd. Gentlemen, I invite you to make an opening statement, after which committee members will have some questions for you.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: With the chair's consent, I am not going to speak as such but I would like to direct Mr Lin to a few subject headings.

CHAIR: Sure.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: Mr Lin, in the written submission there is some talk about the competitive aspect between Cherish and Springfield Land Corp. Can you tell the committee: to the best of your knowledge, how does the land holding, undeveloped but intended for future residential development, between Cherish and Springfield compare?

Mr Lin: We are one of the original developers with Springfield Land Corp. In terms of the land holdings, we have 158 hectares of land remaining and from my understanding that is the biggest unapproved land holding in Greater Springfield, if not on par.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: On to the second topic: I am not sure that the material that has been put before the committee has given the impression or made the representation that the previous precinct plan process had worked efficiently and effectively over the years. Can you tell the committee whether that is the case from the Cherish perspective?

Mr Lin: From Cherish's perspective, the whole process has been very difficult. It has been like running the hurdles for the last 20 or 30 years. It has not worked well. We first tried to get our precinct plan in 2005, but because of the veto clause in the original scheme we needed a letter from Springfield City Group—a consent letter—just to lodge our own precinct plan. That letter did not come until 2008, so it took three years for one letter. Afterwards, when we did finally lodge it with the Ipswich City Council, we started the usual workshop meetings with council, with the assessment team, and then we heard from council that the consent was withdrawn, so they had to cancel our application. I was then invited to a meeting with Bob Sharpless and Russell Luhrs at their office in Springfield. They advised us that, in accordance with our report by GSDL Consultants, we needed about 4,000 EPs, which is equivalent population. They said that the only way we were able to get the EPs was to purchase the EPs from them at $2,000 per EP, which would have equated to about $8 million.

At the time we did not believe this was fair. As a landowner we believed we had the right to make an application to QUU and also Ipswich City Council for EP. We declined that offer. For the next few years we tried to pursue our right to make our own application for more EPs. The original EP for Springfield was 40,000 under the infrastructure agreement. With the first increase it went to 86,000 EPs. We have approached them saying that we need more EPs because the trend for this development has changed. It is now higher density. We started off with 800-square-metre average blocks and now we are seeing 300- or 400-square-metre blocks. We said that we need more EP to provide more density. They said, 'You apply for your own EP.'

We just want our right to apply for more EP. Unfortunately, that process was met with a lot of hurdles and barriers. We made the commercial decision to put through another precinct plan that was one-fifth the size of the original precinct plan just to get around that. We made that application in 2012 and ultimately received approval in 2013. The precinct plan process has taken eight years.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: The third topic is as follows. In the materials before the committee there are statements or at least inferences that the Springfield Land Corporation has been responsible for construction of major infrastructure within the structure plan area. Mr Lin, can you tell the committee what involvement, if any, Cherish has had in the construction of major infrastructure within the development control plan area?

Mr Lin: From the very first day, Cherish has played our part in the development of Greater Springfield. We have contributed 10 per cent towards the construction of the Centenary Highway. We contributed 4/11ths towards an arterial road within Springfield which is known as the Springfield Parkway. We contributed to the Mur Boulevard. We built the first trunk sewer, which is known as the O'Dwyer Creek trunk sewer. We built that at our own cost. We also contributed to the research and restructure of the wildlife corridor. Everything we were required to contribute to as one of the original developers within Springfield we did.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: Can you tell the committee who uses the O'Dwyer trunk sewer?

Mr Lin: The O'Dwyer trunk sewer was the first trunk sewer within Springfield. The arrangement back then was that Cherish would construct the O'Dwyer trunk sewer at its own cost and the Springfield City Group would be able to use the O'Dwyer trunk sewer at no cost. In light of that, they would be constructing the Opossum Creek trunk sewer and Cherish would be able to use it at no cost as well.

At the time, Cherish, through Samuel Lin, the managing director, thought that was a fair arrangement. Unfortunately, what Samuel did not know at the time—O'Dwyer was the first one to be done and Opossum came along quite a few years later—was that for Cherish to use Opossum it was going to be a long time. We are talking about more than 15 years. By the time we wanted to use Opossum it was at capacity. There was no flow possible for any of the Cherish land to go into Opossum.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: Just to clarify that, Mr Lin: the O'Dwyer trunk sewer was built by Cherish?

Mr Lin: Yes.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: Who is it used by?

Mr Lin: Both Cherish and the Springfield City Group.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: The Opossum sewer was constructed by Springfield?

Mr Lin: Yes.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: Who is it used by?

Mr Lin: Springfield City Group because it is at capacity.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: Mr Chairman, that is probably enough for the opening statement. Could I just add one thing. I am conscious not to repeat what is in the written submission. There is a lot of reference to an infrastructure agreement. One of the themes in the written submission that I want to say in one minute is: that agreement, by its own terms, covers arrangements for infrastructure to service an equivalent population of 40,000 persons. That population has already been exceeded. Springfield's own submission says they are going to 143,000.

With respect, I would ask the committee, when it is taken as given in much of the briefing material to the committee that the 1998 Springfield Infrastructure Agreement remains a relevant and appropriate document and that is the agreement under which Springfield demands payment for infrastructure access over and above the payments due to QUU or the council, to understand the proposition that whatever infrastructure that agreement covered was for 40,000 people. That has been built. We are talking now about future infrastructure, which at least in terms of any agreement to which Cherish is a party is not covered by any agreement. That is why Cherish has made the submission that the proposed legislation does not look deeply enough into the infrastructure agreement. It takes it as read in circumstances where, at least from a Cherish perspective, it is about what has already happened whereas the issue now is future infrastructure.

We do not know exactly what arrangements have been made between Springfield, the council and QUU. Cherish does know that it was a party to the original agreement for 40,000 equivalent persons and has not been a party to any other agreement. The proposition is that that agreement is done and dusted because that infrastructure has been built. For future infrastructure the ordinary statutory authorities should control it. I will say no more.

CHAIR: We will now move to questions. In your submission you talk extensively about the dispute resolution process and how you think it is not satisfactory at the moment. Could you expand on that?

Mr Fynes-Clinton: I will, with the committee's leave. Central to the disputes that are likely to arise are disputes about assessment of proposed development against the planning requirements of the DCP. In the other speciality DCP areas—Kawana and Mango Hill's North Lakes—those disputes, on their merits, go to the Planning and Environment Court, which is of course transparent, public and accountable. The process here—and I will not repeat what is in submission—is that it goes to an expert with really no particular accountability. It seems to be based upon an arbitration process under building and construction contracts. The real point is that one goes through that entire process—and I will ask Mr Lin to comment briefly on this—which is a long and extensive process. It then says, 'If you are still unhappy, go to a court of competent jurisdiction,' which is an absolutely meaningless term.

This is reflecting to some degree the much shorter Mirvac submission to the committee that the time has come to bring the dispute resolution process into line not just with what happens in Queensland generally but also with what happens for Kawana and Mango Hill's North Lakes. Mr Lin, could you comment briefly on the time and cost for the one expert determination process you are involved in?

Mr Lin: Yes. We have done the expert process before. It took a few years. It is much longer than going through the court system. As a legal landowner, we just wanted the same right as anyone else in Queensland—the right to go to court. It would be financially more feasible and save a lot of time and resources.

CHAIR: There has been some extensive litigation between yourselves and Springfield Land Corporation. Are there any current proceedings on foot?

Mr Lin: No, we have finalised that. We had the last proceeding about a year and a bit ago. That is why we have lodged our first ADP in accordance with the determination body court of appeal.

Mr KRAUSE: The submission states that in the public briefing held on 1 June departmental officers presented some information that was 'factually and legally incorrect'. Would you be able to expand on that?

Mr Fynes-Clinton: Certainly. As I have heard and from reading the transcript, it was at least suggested that the precinct plan process had been in place since the inception of the DCP. As we have said in our written submission, that is not the case. It was introduced in 2002 by arrangement between the council and Springfield without consultation with Cherish, even though it affected Cherish.

It was not intended that the language be overly strong, and if it was then we should apologise. It was making the point that the committee could have been given the impression by the public briefing that this precinct planning process was in place right from the start. It was not. It was something brought in five or six years after the DCP started, affecting Cherish but without any consultation with Cherish. The impression given, that it had always been there, is not correct.

The other aspect was a matter I have already addressed—and perhaps the language was a little strong—and that was the inference or suggestion that the expert resolution process was something that everybody was happy with and works. At least it seems from the perspective of Cherish that the committee should have been informed that this is the only place in Queensland where there is no court to go to for the resolution of disputes. I have made the point, and I will not repeat it, that there is a vague reference in the fine print to a court of competent jurisdiction but there is no such thing.

The suggestion seemed to be that the expert determination process worked well or was somehow comparable with other areas and should not attract the committee's attention, whereas our position is that, because it provides for a longer and less transparent process than going to the court and does not give us the right to go to court, then it is a process that requires closer investigation and what was intended to be conveyed was that, at least it seemed from Cherish, the committee was insufficiently informed of the unique nature and at least the asserted deficiencies of that process. It was more the implication that everything was fine. When one drills down to the detail, from Cherish's perspective that is not in fact the case. It was not intended to suggest that anyone had misled anybody, just that from Cherish's perspective there was a lack of full and sufficient detail about arguable deficiencies in the current system.

Mrs MULLEN: When did you first purchase the land in Greater Springfield?

Mr Lin: In 1992.

Mrs MULLEN: The first time you put a precinct plan in was 2005; is that correct?

Mr Lin: When we first purchased the land in 1992, Springfield Land Corporation proceeded with what was known as a stage 1 rezoning. That gave approval to 1,100 lots. Of the 1,100 lots, 700 lots belonged to the Springfield Land Corporation, as they were known back then, and Cherish had 400 lots. That was our first stage. That first stage started in the late 1990s.

Mrs MULLEN: But you have not developed at all in the area?

Mr Lin: Only the first 400 lots and then we pretty much got held up with that precinct plan. When we finally did get that precinct plan we sold it to Stockland, and their development is known as Kalina.

Mrs MULLEN: You speak of a veto. The proposed legislation, as I read it, actually removes Springfield City Group's current right to be the sole one that can make plan applications for certain plans. How does giving them consultation rights, rather than what you call a veto, adversely affect Cherish going forward?

Mr Lin: One of the clauses under the bill gives Springfield City Group the right to make a statement about whether a plan is adverse to the Springfield Structure Plan or a statement about whether there is adequate infrastructure to cater for the proposed development.

Mrs MULLEN: That is just a statement. Ultimately the decision-maker would still be Ipswich City Council; is that correct?

Mr Lin: I hope so.

Mrs MULLEN: Ipswich City Council is the decision-maker; are they not? They are the authority under the assessment?

Mr Lin: It depends how much weight is given to that statement. Those involved should be Ipswich City Council and Urban Utilities, which was known as QUU. They are known as the legal assessment managers. From our point of view, they should be the ones assessing our application on its merits, not a private company that is a direct competitor. We are pretty much the only competitor in Greater Springfield. I just want someone to assess our application on its merits so that it is fair, objective and independent.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: If I can answer the same question, the veto has been removed. That is true. The matters about which Springfield can then make representations are much broader. 'Adverse impact on the structure plan area' is a phrase that could be a like rubber band. Springfield is able to make representations about infrastructure although it is no longer the infrastructure provider. I will not repeat what I said earlier about the 1998 agreement and the fact that we have moved. If Springfield does not like what the council does with a Cherish application then we are into the dispute resolution process. If that was in the Planning and Environment Court, Cherish would say, 'Well, so be it,' but it would be convoluted, we say.

Given the history between the parties—and it is not suggested that either party has acted in bad faith—disputes are certain. There will be future litigation if Cherish tries to move forward with the development. Certainly the veto has been removed, but the breadth of the matters that Springfield can now raise in representations under proposed new section 275Z is broader than under the current DCP and, given the history between the parties, is likely to be productive of long, drawn-out disputes. If access was settled at the Planning and Environment Court, as members may be aware that court sets strict timetables and does not let matters sit around.

Ms BOLTON: For those who might be listening in or who may read *Hansard* afterwards, can you explain very simply why Cherish has submitted on a bill that is to do with tenure for a wind farm? Secondly, what is the submission ultimately trying to achieve if, as the member for Jordan outlined, the process that you are in is with the Ipswich City Council?

Mr Fynes-Clinton: I will let Mr Lin answer, but on the first point, while it is the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill, Cherish has submitted only in respect of those amendments to the Planning Act that were tacked on in respect of Springfield. It has not stuck its nose into anything else.

Ms BOLTON: That is fine.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: The implication behind the question seems to be, 'Why have you submitted in respect to the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill when that is not your business?' Cherish has not. It has submitted in respect of the addition to that bill, which has nothing to do with its primary purpose and which causes Cherish concern.

Ms BOLTON: There was no implication. Queenslanders would be understandably confused because this is very complex, but the bill itself is about a forest wind farm. It was the relationship to that, which is to do with Springfield.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: One part of the bill is about Springfield and Springfield only. That has been the subject of the submission. Most of the bill is about the other topic. We have not touched it. It is not our business.

Ms BOLTON: That is fine. It just gives clarity for anyone listening, because it is complex. The second question is: ultimately, what are you looking to achieve from being at this hearing and from your submission?

Mr Fynes-Clinton: I appreciate that what comes out of it may depend upon the extent to which the committee accepts the broad submission, which is that bolting things onto the dispute resolution process is an overhasty and inappropriate way to proceed when the dispute resolution process itself, for reasons we have set out in our submission, requires a review after 23 years. Secondly, the infrastructure agreement of 1998 does not appear to be affected by this bill. I have already said something about why we say it is outdated.

Cherish knows from dealings—and it is not meant to be aggressive—that everybody involved—council, QUU, Springfield—is proceeding on the basis that that agreement somehow still has currency and relevance, including an ability for Springfield to charge landowners such as Cherish for the right

to develop over and above infrastructure charges imposed by QUU or the council. What we are seeking to achieve in that regard is to ensure that the infrastructure agreement does not operate to prevent development of the Cherish land on its merits and infrastructure assessment by the infrastructure providers, and that it is not able to continue to be used by Springfield to assert that Cherish cannot develop at more than 4,000 equivalent persons without paying Springfield for the privilege in circumstances where that premise comes from an agreement about providing infrastructure for 40,000 persons and Cherish having 10 per cent of that right. The population is already well past 40,000 persons. Infrastructure is going to be for the future, not the past.

The second thing that Cherish is seeking to achieve is to recognise that the infrastructure agreement should be subject to the new provisions and should not in itself be a barrier to development, which is otherwise assessable on its merits by the relevant authorities.

Mrs MULLEN: In your submission you mentioned that Springfield City Group has now been fully credited for the water supply and sewerage infrastructure it had supplied under the 1998 infrastructure agreement. You said that any claims for credit would then constitute a double dipping. I understood that, under the Springfield Infrastructure Agreement, Springfield City Group does not accrue water or sewer credits for the infrastructure that it has built. Can you explain that point?

Mr Fynes-Clinton: I did not bring the agreement with me, but certainly that is not my understanding. I have read it a few times but I could be wrong. It is a complex document. On my understanding it says, 'Here is the infrastructure to be provided. Council will build some.' This is back in the days when the council was the authority. 'Springfield will build some and for what Springfield builds it will get credits against charges otherwise payable under the council's policies.' If I am wrong about that, and it will need to be investigated—and if I am wrong about that I will write to the committee and apologise, but I know the agreement fairly well. Unless I have missed something fundamental, the infrastructure package, which has now been built anyway, was part council and part Springfield. To the extent that Springfield built it, it would get credits against what we now call 'infrastructure charges' and what used to be called 'headworks charges' otherwise payable. That was the understanding of the agreement upon which that submission proceeded.

This was the question that was raised: given how the population has moved on and given the infrastructure that has been constructed, has Springfield now been credited with the full costs of the infrastructure provided? It may not have been. We do not know; we do not have access to the records. Given that there are more than 40,000 persons there now and given that the infrastructure contemplated by the agreement appears to have been built because it is serving more than 40,000 persons, there is at least a risk—and we put it at no higher than that because we do not know—that Springfield has been fully reimbursed by credits but is still charging people such as Cherish for the right to develop on the assertion that 'you are putting load on our infrastructure'. Because Cherish will have to pay infrastructure charges et cetera to QUU or the council, there is a potential for a double dip.

Ultimately, the equivalent person payment that Springfield seeks is justified as a contribution towards the cost of infrastructure and the question raised—to which we do not know the answer; we just think it is a question that needs answering—is: if Springfield has already been reimbursed then is it getting a bonus? Secondly, how does that meld in legally with the legal powers of QUU and the council to make infrastructure charges? How does one ensure that a developer such as Cherish is not being charged twice for the same thing? That is part of the reason Cherish is concerned about the 1998 infrastructure agreement being accepted as a given in this legislation, rather than being the subject of closer scrutiny.

CHAIR: Mr Fynes-Clinton, if you want to provide further information in relation to the question of the member for Jordan, can we have that by 10 am on 22 June? I will leave it up to you, because you have answered it. I will leave it up to you if you wish to do that. That avenue is open to you.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: Does that go to the committee or to the member?

CHAIR: To the secretariat and then it will come to committee members.

Mr BOOTHMAN: You were talking about the potential additional cost. What do you feel that cost could be? You were talking about double dipping and that you have already paid for these sewerage upgrades et cetera. What potential additional cost would affect Cherish?

Mr Fynes-Clinton: I think the question is for you, Mr Lin. What additional infrastructure may Cherish have to either build or pay for?

Mr Lin: From our point of view, we just want the right to submit to Urban Utilities that this is how much EP we need. Urban Utilities are responsible for making a calculation on what infrastructure needs to go in and how much they need to charge us on a lot basis. We pay them an infrastructure charge on a lot basis.

Mr BOOTHMAN: You mentioned that you could do only one-fifth of the number of lots that you wanted to do.

Mr Lin: Yes.

Mr BOOTHMAN: What financial impact did that have on your business?

Mr Lin: It was eight years of standing idle and paying a lot of holding costs and charges. We strongly disagree with paying for EPs, because we do not believe EPs are a saleable commodity. From our understanding, EPs are owned by Urban Utilities. Like any other developer in Queensland, they give you an infrastructure charge and you pay it. That is what we are asking for: to be like everyone else.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: To answer the member's question, have you had any estimates, even in ballpark terms, of the infrastructure charge you would be required to pay for the balance of your development? If you do not know—

Mr Lin: I am not sure on that one. I would probably have to ask my engineers.

Mrs MULLEN: In terms of purchasing EP, you indicated earlier that you would purchase EP from Springfield City Group, but you have just said that you would purchase it from Queensland Urban Utilities. Can you only purchase from Springfield City Group or—

Mr Lin: No, we do not want to purchase from Springfield City Group.

Mrs MULLEN: Do you have to?

Mr Lin: That is what they would like.

Mr Fynes-Clinton: That is going to be the subject of litigation, because the Cherish position is that the infrastructure is owned by QUU or the council. They grant access and they impose infrastructure charges as a contribution. Springfield's position is that that does not matter—sorry. As Cherish sees it and understands it, Springfield is saying, 'No, to access the infrastructure you also have to pay us under the 1998 agreement.' When Mr Lin said that Springfield does not have to sell, what he meant was that Springfield does not own the infrastructure. You do not purchase EPs as such from Queensland Urban Utilities or the council but you pay an infrastructure charge that is calculated on the nature and density of your development, so it is the same concept.

CHAIR: Gentlemen, the time for this session has expired. Mr Lin and Mr Fynes-Clinton, thank you for your time today.

van VEENENDAAL, Mr Theo, Development Consultant, Mirvac Retail (via videoconference)

ZALTRON, Mr Martin, Manager of Policy, Urban Development Institute of Australia (via videoconference)

CHAIR: Good morning, Mr Zaltron and Mr van Veenendaal. Welcome to our committee proceedings. We are hoping Mirvac will join us. They have some technological problems at the moment. We will start with you and hopefully Mirvac will join us. We will give them an opportunity to make an opening statement and then proceed to questions from committee members.

Mr Zaltron: Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak in favour of the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill. I will talk about the provisions relating to Springfield in particular. I am the manager of policy for the Urban Development Institute of Australia Queensland, which is the peak body for the property development industry in Queensland. The industry employs 10 per cent of the state's workforce and much more indirectly in economic impact. The industry contributes around $26 billion a year to gross state product.

Springfield is a key project in the economic activity that occurs in the state. It provides employment and homes particularly to meet Queensland's growing population. Going forward, just in residential development alone, my quick calculations indicate that that there will be around $10 billion worth of investment in homes in Springfield in the next 20 to 25 years and, of course, much more in commercial development, industrial, retail and community investment. Looking at planning in the regional context, the South East Queensland Regional Plan sets up the state's directions and vision for South-East Queensland. It indicates that 111,700 extra homes are needed in the Ipswich council area to 2041, Ipswich being one of the largest growth areas for new homes in South-East Queensland.

Of the Ipswich benchmark that they need to meet in terms of new homes, around a third of those new homes will be in the Springfield growth area. Current development has built all the core elements in Springfield to allow for that growth to occur. It has been largely developed in partnership with the state including road investment and rail investment. The Springfield CBD is in place—including a hospital, office developments, the university and a range of other commercial projects—in keeping with the state's objective of achieving local employment and the state's vision about more compact development going forward, well-serviced homes, well-connected homes, innovative development and supporting the general growth that South-East Queensland needs to have going toward the western parts of South-East Queensland.

The project has worked through the hardest stages, if you like—getting it up and running. I think the bill supports the benefits to the community of getting to this stage in enabling the project to go forward. The bill, if passed, will reduce the uncertainty that has come into the project in recent times. It will protect that investment—

CHAIR: I will ask you to wind up, please, so we can move on to questions.

Mr Zaltron: It will protect the investment that has been undertaken. Largely, a lot of that has been predicated on the structure plan that is in place at the moment and the arrangements around that. To wrap up quickly, the institute supports the bill to continue the work of the Springfield City Group in delivering the vision for Springfield.

CHAIR: Mr van Veenendaal, thank you for joining us. It is great to see you. I invite you to make a brief opening statement and then we will open it up to questions from committee members to both of you.

Mr van Veenendaal: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill. Mirvac commends the Queensland government for considering how to provide further clarification and certainty within the planning framework for the land within the Springfield Structure Plan. Mirvac have been actively involved in Springfield as a developer, owner and operator of Orion regional shopping centre at Springfield Central since 2002. Mirvac has a strong, long-term commitment to Springfield, to the Ipswich city and to Queensland as an investor, major employer and provider of retail, entertainment and gathering space that is important to Ipswich and valued by the local community.

Mirvac is committed to continuing its investment in the future stages of Orion Springfield Central. Mirvac's investment in Orion Springfield Central is in excess of $400 million. We have made in excess of 30 applications relating to the Springfield Structure Plan and made submissions in relation to applications made by others under the Springfield Structure Plan. The approval process

under the current planning regime is quite complex, in particular for the Orion regional shopping centre, which is a major shopping centre within Springfield Central. As someone once explained to me, it is like a Russian doll: there are several layers which we need to navigate. First, there is the Ipswich planning scheme. Then there is the Springfield Structure Plan. Then there is what they call the town centre concept plan. Then there is a master area development plan. Last of all, there is an area development plan, which basically is the DA. This multilayered planning document regime leads to inconsistencies in definition, does not give certainty to development and results in unnecessary conflict.

Mirvac has participated in the dispute resolution process established in the Springfield Structure Plan on a number of occasions. Most recently we were involved in a dispute which was heard in the Planning and Environment Court on 4 November last year, Mirvac Queensland Pty Ltd v Ipswich City Council. That further highlighted the complexities of the planning regime to the extent that I understand that His Honour Judge Everson was quite scathing about the planning regime. Mirvac has also made many applications elsewhere in Queensland and has considerable experience in the Queensland planning system including dispute resolution processes under the Planning Act.

Mirvac submits that there are no planning benefits or considerable disadvantage to applicants, submitters or the wider community achieved by the retention of the structure plan and the dispute resolution process in its current form. It is Mirvac's view that effective infrastructure delivery is not dependent on retention of the Springfield Structure Plan in its original form and that retention of the Springfield Structure Plan hampers good planning and effective planning processes. As part of the planning scheme review currently being undertaken by Ipswich City Council, the planning vision for Springfield Structure Plan should be retained and planning provisions updated to be consistent with the current Planning Act and the balance of the planning scheme including the zoning and development planning criteria. Infrastructure delivery provisions should be retained where relevant to new development or redevelopment.

CHAIR: Mr Zaltron, could you place this in context with the challenges facing your industry? We heard earlier today about the quite significant jobs that will be created by this project, particularly in regional communities. Obviously many industries are facing challenges due to the current pandemic. Could you let us know how your industry is coping and put it in context with the jobs that this bill will provide for?

Mr Zaltron: We recently undertook a survey of members on how they were progressing through this difficult time. We were really knocked back on our seats by the level of concern out there amongst members cancelling projects wherever they could or pausing projects. It is very important that we do what we can to create some confidence out there. The level of concern was anything from no effect to 100 per cent knockback; taking a 50 per cent impact is quite possible. There have been some changes since that with a little bit of opening up of things as well as some incentives. I think we need to do much more in terms of incentives to buyers to stimulate the industry and as far as we can maintain certainty with those projects that are currently available and undergoing work at the moment to keep people employed. Springfield is certainly one of those projects. It is working, building and employing at the moment.

Mr KRAUSE: Mr van Veenendaal, your submission outlines that there is also a need to consider the most effective and efficient way of regulating further development into the future. Would you be willing to expand upon that and give Mirvac's view about what a future transition might look like?

Mr van Veenendaal: We see that the problem with the structure plan is that it was developed some 20 years ago and it really was developed for a greenfield site. When we look at Springfield, it is almost 50 per cent through its development. The planning scheme has had three or four different variations in the last 10 years. I think now it is a legacy; it has some grandfather-type revisions in there which are quite difficult to actually navigate. Everything we have tried to do at Orion Springfield is to envisage what was to be the town centre for that whole Springfield community and try to create that urban community hub in that location where the community meets so much so that we had what is called new urbanism with having a main street running through the middle of it. We actually convinced Ipswich City Council to get the library in there. We also now have the water park sitting in there which has become very important to the community within the larger area of Springfield. I do not know if that clarifies your question or not.

Mrs MULLEN: You mentioned some of those features of the Orion shopping centre. I would think it has benefited from the master planning process in terms of access to the rail station nearby, the Robelle Domain Parklands that are also there and of course the lagoon, which you mentioned. Do you believe that you could have achieved all those benefits if you had operated under a planning scheme system?

Mr van Veenendaal: As I mentioned before, I think the issue with that is when you have a greenfield development. I do not think that could have happened without the greenfield development. Now we are almost 50 per cent through it, I think we have to go back to a planning scheme with more certainty with regard to that. Although the influence the master planner has on it has been very helpful, I think it now has to start to mesh itself into an overall planning scheme. It is just too complex and it leads to disputes.

Mrs MULLEN: I have followed your most recent court case, which I understand was with Home Consortium.

Mr van Veenendaal: Yes.

Mrs MULLEN: Is that more a case of competitiveness in the market which you would have in a planning scheme anyway? I have seen litigation occur between shopping centre developers, particularly on the Gold Coast. I know that has been prevalent. Do you think it is an issue with the way the structure plan operates, or do you think it is just a case of, as the development fills out, more competitive opportunities occurring when you are not the sole shopping centre anymore?

Mr van Veenendaal: I hear where you are coming from. Let me assure you that our dispute with HomeCo has nothing to do with competitiveness. It is to do with having the right solution for the community in that location. The original master plan, which is the MADP, had that as bulky goods, as large format. Originally, it was a Masters hardware site. HomeCo are envisaging creating that into a convenience type of shopping centre. That is our concern, because it is taking away the hierarchy of what that centre should be. It is the interpretation of that.

That court case was the first stage. We have four other disputes on that as well. What has happened with HomeCo goes to the definition of supporting uses. They are suggesting that a supporting use to a bulky goods is a childcare centre, a gymnasium or something like TK Maxx, the fashion retailer. It is actually taking away from what the hierarchy should be. That is the difficulty we have. Mirvac has spent a lot of money trying to create what is a new urbanism with a main street concept. Then we have these peripheral type of developers who are utilising all the contributions that Mirvac has put into place for their own short-term benefit, in my opinion.

Ms BOLTON: Mr Zaltron, you talked about the importance of orderly planning and an infrastructure framework for the welfare and development of communities. We have also heard about the impacts of these types of multilayered regimes on those. What else needs to be improved or what can we address to finally really connect with that welfare of our communities in their plights for affordable housing? How is that going to occur? What else do we need to do?

Mr Zaltron: Linking back to Springfield particularly, I think we have a relatively complicated legacy of planning controls. Coming from a planning background, I would say to you that it would be desirable to review the schemes that are in place there. The bill is not really a juncture for doing that, but over a few years we should review the planning schemes incorporating the most modern arrangements into that, probably starting with Ipswich City Council and the state. At the moment we are kind of in a fix situation with the bill. Trying to do anything particular here is a bit like unscrambling an egg, so let us progress with what we have. There are some improvements proposed to the dispute resolution process. We need to move on with that. It will allow us to deliver those affordable homes that Springfield has been doing for a number of years and the benefits that are delivered from that perhaps while we have a more root-and-branch review of the planning scheme, which will take some time.

Ms BOLTON: Is the Urban Development Institute looking at that?

Mr Zaltron: That would be, I think, the Ipswich City Council and the state looking at their planning schemes for that area. We would support any review in that space to get to more modern arrangements but for the moment seek that this bill passes to enable the carrying on of development in the project which is largely not the subject of disputation. A number of developers work in that area including Mirvac, Stockland and Lendlease delivering very substantial projects, and certainly that should carry on with the minimum kind of intervention or uncertainty or upset to the arrangements that are put in place and are predicated on the scheme as it is at the moment.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Martin, Mr Chair spoke about COVID-19 and the economic impacts of what is transpiring in Queensland at the moment. Obviously all of our electorates have a fair degree of tradies and they are all very concerned about their future jobs. What can the Queensland government do to help the processes along, especially in these turbulent times with COVID-19? As you also explained, a few of the projects have obviously been put on hold or deferred. How can we get over this hurdle and create a situation where we can get some progression on these projects and bring some confidence back into the industry?

Mr Zaltron: That is kind of like a Dorothy Dixer question to me, if you like, as the policy manager of the UDIA as an advocacy body.

CHAIR: The member for Theodore has a bit of experience with that.

Mr Zaltron: We have a document called Project Bounce Back. One of the things we have looked at in there is waiver of stamp duty for new homes, for both first home owners and investors, to generate that confidence and incentive to homebuyers to move on that. There is a whole range of other things such as lots of regulatory reforms that could be put in place as well as efforts at local government level in terms of deferring of infrastructure charges that we have heard a little about—that is, at least deferring them to the time of settlement of sale of the land. At the moment they come in at peak debt in the project. With little cost to councils, the timing could be shifted to reduce that impact. I will not go on at length, but certainly our Project Bounce Back document is there and available and I would be happy to provide additional information to the committee.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I would appreciate that.

CHAIR: As there are no further questions from committee members, thank you very much, gentlemen, for taking the time to appear before the committee today and for your submissions.

TABULO, Mr Peter, General Manager (Planning and Regulatory Services), Ipswich City Council (via videoconference)

CHAIR: I invite you to make an opening statement and then we will open it up to the committee for questions.

Mr Tabulo: Thank you, Mr Chair. In accordance with our submission dated 8 June, council made a number of comments with respect to part 8, division 4 of the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill 2020. These provisions relate to the proposed amendments to the Planning Act 2016. Whilst council's written submission details matters with reference to particular sections of the bill, for today's briefings I am going to summarise the comments to four particular topics.

The first one is with regard to SCG written statements, and that relates to section 275Z of the bill. Council has concerns about the scope of representations that SCG must give in response to a non-SCG plan application. Council submits that these matters are subjective in nature and should be narrowed for SCG to specifically identify any issues that a non-SCG plan application has with respect to the proceeding approval framework. For example, does the precinct plan application comply with the land use concept master plan or does the area development plan application comply with the precinct plan? Council also notes that Urban Utilities has a role to play in the planning and delivery of water infrastructure. How this relates to any interest of SCG is important—noting, however, that SCG is not an infrastructure asset owner nor does it advise on the future planning of the infrastructure network. Council's written submission is that the bill be amended to reflect the provisions of the approved water and sewerage master plans in this respect.

The second area I want to touch on this afternoon relates to the transitional provisions which are referred to in section 353 of the bill. Council submits that the transitional provisions of the bill be expanded to exclude the provisions in section 275ZB, and that section relates to restricting development from commencing in certain instances. What we are seeking there is that all development applications that are properly made but are not yet decided by council at the time of commencement be allowed to be assessed in accordance with the current legislative framework. The failure of the transitional provisions to be expanded to allow for this to occur may result in a development approval being given but does not allow the development to commence due to the new restrictions proposed by the bill. This is fundamentally important given the current economic climate and the need to have certainty, particularly with financing of projects, with respect to being able to proceed with development approvals when they are granted by council and not being further constrained by further restrictions as detailed in 275ZB.

The third area relates to the removal of duplicated processes, and this is covered in a number of sections within the bill. What we submit is that the bill provides for duplication of processes which in part are already provided for under section 2.2.4.6 of the Springfield Structure Plan. We submit that this results in an inefficient outcome whereby the applicant provides the non-SCG plan application to the Springfield City Group and then council is also required to approve an area development plan application to the Springfield City Group under the structure plan. Given that the definition of 'SCG plan application' includes an area development plan application, council requests that the amendments be made to the bill to prevent the council having to duplicate this process under the structure plan after the applicant. This would also reduce duplication for the Springfield City Group.

The fourth area relates to dispute resolution, which is contained within section 275ZE of the bill. With respect to dispute resolution under the Springfield Structure Plan, council submits that the bill be amended to allow interested parties who have made a submission under 2.3.1 of the Springfield Structure Plan to have the ability to give a dispute notice and elect to join a dispute. For clarity, section 2.3.1 of the Springfield Structure Plan relates to applications to amend the town centre concept plan or precinct plan. Pursuant to this section, council may seek submissions from interested parties where the amendment being proposed is not minor, as defined in the structure plan. This amendment to the bill would provide for consistency with the relevant section of the bill whereby submitters for development applications or change applications may give a dispute notice or be entitled to join a dispute.

Finally, I refer to clarifications throughout the proposed bill. I do not want to go into specific details on those matters, but the council has provided a number of suggestions for the workability of the bill as to how we think it can provide further certainty around a range of issues and also clarity with respect to assessment of development applications and non-development applications. That is all I have to say in my opening statement. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. We will now move on to questions. Mr Tabulo, I note that the council's submission is confined to the proposed amendments to the Planning Act, which is obviously the council's right. Earlier today we heard about the economic benefits of the bill, so green jobs in regional communities, obviously including Ipswich, if this bill were to go ahead. I was just wondering if the council had a view in relation to those economic benefits that have been put forward.

Mr Tabulo: Any changes to legislation that ensure that development can be moving through the planning system quicker and more efficiently can only be a positive. As I said, we think there are some minor matters of clarity that could be improved by the bill just to help that, but overall we are supportive of the concept of further economic development coming out of the proposed changes to the bill.

Mr KRAUSE: Mr Tabulo, in relation to the dispute resolution process you recommend that the bill be amended to allow parties, which council may seek a submission from in relation to the Springfield Structure Plan, the ability to join a dispute. I think you may have touched on this briefly, but can you just expand on that submission a little and give us an example of circumstances where it might apply?

Mr Tabulo: The bill is bringing in provisions that allow for interested parties to join in a dispute. However, there is a current section of the structure plan that allows council to invite interested parties where an amendment is not a minor amendment. If council is considering an application for a large shopping centre, for example, we do not think it is minor and we can invite interested parties to come and make comment on that application. The right for those interested parties to then take the matter further is not currently allowed for under the current structure plan arrangement. We just believe that for consistency the proposed amendments put forward in the bill should bring in some requirements to allow for those interested parties under that section of the structure plan—2.3.1—to have the same rights as other people or other submitters in a formal process.

Mrs MULLEN: In terms of the dispute resolution process, 'interested parties' could then be quite broadly interpreted and opened up to pretty much anyone who has an interest. Does that not then get us into trouble in terms of delays, further dispute issues and potential court action if it opens the process up to the point at which there is uncertainty? Is that not part of why Springfield has kind of worked—because there has been planning certainty around what has been provided?

Mr Tabulo: The Planning Act as it currently stands, that applies across the state, does not differentiate as to where submitters come from or their standing. In the Springfield Structure Plan process we have this provision whereby, where we think something is not minor, council has the ability to go out to interested parties and decide who has or might have an interest in a particular matter. The whole arrangement is not the same as the Planning Act generally, where anyone can make a submission. What we want to consider is: if we bring someone to the table because we as council think they may be interested in a particular aspect of a major development, those parties should have the right to be formally heard if the matter goes further to a dispute resolution process.

Mrs MULLEN: In the Planning Act, is that not limited to impact assessable type development rather than code assessable or as-of-right?

Mr Tabulo: That would be correct, yes.

Ms BOLTON: You raised the issue of duplications, including the consultation process and the inefficient outcomes. Can you give me just one example of one of those? Often what we hear from community is that they need more consultation. There is obviously a difference between enough consultation and inefficient ones. Could you give me an example of an inefficient outcome?

Mr Tabulo: The consultation that I mentioned in the submission is probably not necessarily relating to community or public consultation. It is more the duplication in process that an applicant has to make by providing their application to the Springfield City Group and then to council. Council then has to provide the information to the Springfield City Group as well. We just think there is an ability to streamline that process so there does not have to be this sending of information backwards and forwards. It can be done just once. That is just some clarification in the wording of the legislation.

Ms BOLTON: To anyone who was an interested party, there would be no negative outcomes there?

Mr Tabulo: No, I do not believe so.

Mr BOOTHMAN: You talked about the duplication of documentation. What types of delays would that cause?

Mr Tabulo: It may not be significant. It is just the process and transferring information, reports, documentation and those types of matters. When you want to streamline a process, if you can eliminate where we are just moving paper or files around for the sake of it, it has to be an improvement to the system.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Obviously if you are filling out all this additional paperwork you have more legal fees et cetera. I can understand why you mentioned it in your submission. Can you give one example of duplication in these submission processes that could be easily rectified?

Mr Tabulo: It is a matter of just eliminating one of the steps. If the applicant has to notify SCG and council when putting in an application, there is no need for council to go back and notify SCG about the same details.

CHAIR: Thank you for your time today, Peter. You definitely have the best business shirt we have seen via videoconference. Well done! Have a good afternoon.

LUHRS, Mr Russell, Chief Operating Officer, Springfield City Group Pty Ltd

CHAIR: I welcome you to our proceedings today—last but not least! We will continue with the format we have had previously. We will invite you to give an opening statement and then we will open it up to the committee for questions. The floor is yours.

Mr Luhrs: Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee. It is a difficult challenge to condense 28 years of history into a 15-minute opening statement, but I will give it my best. First of all, thank you for the opportunity to address the State Development, Tourism, Innovation and Manufacturing Committee on the proposed Forest Wind Farm Development Bill 2020 as it relates to part 8, division 4 of the bill, which reflects the effects of amending the Springfield Structure Plan. As indicated, I am Russell Luhrs. I am the chief operating officer for the Springfield City Group and an urban planner by profession. I actually had the privilege of curating the implementation of the vision of the founder, Maha Sinnathamby, and his business partner, Bob Sharpless, for Greater Springfield, the community development and city-building project. Over the past 15 years I have been working with this planning scheme and infrastructure framework. That is only 15 years of its 28-year history.

For the purpose of context, I thought I might introduce you a little bit to Springfield and just give you some of the highlights of what is a really unique project. Springfield City Group is a private company that is the major landowner and the designated master developer that conceived of and is responsible for the delivery of the Greater Springfield project, which is a community development and city-building project. That talks about two elements: community and the scale of a project. We talk about 'city' not as a position of local government power but scale. This is a big project being developed over a long period of time.

Springfield City Group works with a range of stakeholders such as landowners, development partners, all levels of government and the community to realise the vision for Greater Springfield. The vision simply, to condense it, for Greater Springfield is to create a city that supports a sustainable and inclusive community where people can live, work, learn and play. I will break down those elements in a little more detail for you. Springfield City Group has been curating the implementation of the vision for the past 28 years to transform what was 2,860 hectares of forestry plantation in the Ipswich local government area into a burgeoning centre of city scale that includes, currently, five suburbs that hub around a core, the sixth suburb Springfield Central. The core is 390 hectares of land that we set aside for a pre-planned emerging central business district.

Over the past 28 years that we have been on this journey, Greater Springfield has evolved from having no residents to a point where it has grown to accommodate 43,000 residents. We currently are working on an arrangement where we are planning for an equivalent population ultimately of 143,000 people. We are at 43,000 but we are planning for 143,000. Currently, there are approximately 18,000 dwellings in suburban areas that we have built predominantly to this point in time, but we have preapproval for 46,000 dwellings to be delivered to support that population of 143,000 people. Roughly, that is broken down into about 24,000 dwellings in suburban areas—those five suburbs that hub around the core—and 22,000 apartments in the compact urban CBD centre. We currently support more than 20,000 jobs. Twenty-eight years ago there were no jobs in in this community. Now we have 20,000 jobs on a population base of about 43,000. That is one job for almost every two people living in that community. Ultimately, with a central business district, we aspire to accommodate around 60,000-plus jobs in that area in the sectors of education, health, technology, retail and commercial business. It is a real central business district. We look to accommodate those jobs in a pre-planned central business district that has a preapproved allocation of 2.6 million square metres of GFA. That is akin to what exists in the Brisbane central area at this point of time.

It currently supports 10,000 students accommodated in 11 public and private schools but will ultimately support a planned student population of 20,000, with direct access to a range of lifelong learning services, institutions and facilities within the project. It also accommodates phase 1 of a health and wellness precinct, with a hospital that we have delivered in partnership with Mater. That will provide services to both the local and the broader regional community within the Greater Springfield catchment. It is well planned and serviced with regard to all the necessary functional infrastructure, provided in accordance with the series of master plans that we, the master developer, were required to prepare on behalf of other parties and have approved by the various groups, be it council or QUU. That infrastructure covers the various sectors of transport, water and sewer, open space, energy, information and communications technologies, and social and community development infrastructure—all the aspects you would expect to be addressed in an urban setting.

To date, Greater Springfield has seen approximately $18 billion invested by various stakeholders into the creation of this unique community and city-building project. We currently generate in excess of approximately $24 million annually for Ipswich City Council through rate revenue that did not exist prior to this project being conceived. I do agree that Mr Tabulo has a very good dress sense!

Springfield makes a significant contribution not only to the City of Ipswich and its rate revenue but also to the state of Queensland in terms of its contribution to GDP. At times, that has been equivalent to if not greater than the resource sector in the Surat Basin. The Greater Springfield project has been acknowledged by the federal government as a project of national significance that is an urban development exemplar that demonstrates the benefits of long-term strategic planning and coordinated infrastructure provision for the stimulation of a region and the creation of a sustainable community.

A fundamental key to the success of Greater Springfield has been the provision of certainty, achieved through the statutory integrated planning and infrastructure framework and the role of Springfield City Group as the master developer or the curator of that framework. It is a very unusual setting that you have an entity like Springfield City Group performing what would be the function typically of a local authority in that assessment of planning applications and the provision of infrastructure. That was part of the fundamental tenet on which Springfield was established. The government said, 'We think this is premature. If you want to take the risk and go and do that you can, but you provide all the infrastructure.' We said, 'If we are going to do that, we need certainty. If we are providing the infrastructure, we need to be part of the planning process so that we can sequence the delivery of that in a timely manner to facilitate the outcomes that we aspiring to achieve.' The government supported Springfield in that respect because back in January 1997 the state planning act, which was at that stage the Integrated Planning Act, put into place the Springfield Development Control Plan, which set in place the vision for Springfield. It has now been morphed into what is the Springfield Structure Plan that forms part of the City of Ipswich.

On 26 March a year later, having spent 2½ years negotiating it, we had the Springfield Infrastructure Agreement approved with the Ipswich City Council. We also have a second infrastructure agreement with the state government—which we are almost to the point of having concluded our obligations under—which requires to us provide land to the state free for firies, ambulance and police, essential services, areas for schools—we provided over 20 hectares for state schools—and we make a per lot contribution to the cost of the capital infrastructure that goes on that.

In relation to the council's infrastructure agreement, it effectively said, 'If you want this to happen, you have to provide all the trunk infrastructure and we will not provide you with credits for that trunk infrastructure.' We took that on as an obligation for the ability to have a role in the plan-making process to then coordinate the sequencing, the ability to roll out that infrastructure and support it.

The framework has also enshrined the role of Springfield City Group as a curator of this project through its designation as the master developer. As such, it has provided significant obligation on us to provide the necessary infrastructure to support the project that would otherwise have been provided by the local authority for which we received no credits but we received a seat at the table in the plan-making process. This process is about that having been broken and trying to re-establish that to ensure the ongoing success of the project.

The planning and infrastructure framework also assigned Springfield City Group a role in the plan-making process, in partnership with the local government authority. The Ipswich City Council is the local government authority and the planning approval entity, but, because of the associated responsibility for provision of infrastructure, there are a number of systems and processes that allow us to participate in that process around plan making to ensure the application being made to the council is consistent with our planning scheme and is then supported by the infrastructure. When we consent—as we used to—to the making of the application by a third party we are tacitly saying to the local authority, 'We acknowledge the obligations that go with the provision of the trunk infrastructure that supports this.' This is not the local authority's issue and it is not QUU's; it is our issue. We have to stump up and provide that infrastructure to support a third party's development.

This framework has performed extremely well and has served the project, community and stakeholders well to date. We would say that obviously it must be preserved going forward because the project is only about 18 to 20 per cent completed. Notwithstanding all of the information I just shared about what has been done, we are about 20 per cent of the way through the development capacity of our project. Do you recall the 2.6 million square metres of preapproved GFI I referred to in the city centre? We still have to propagate a lot of that. We are about 20 per cent of the way through

and we have been in play for three decades now—28 years. We think that in the next 30 years we have four times as much work to do, and that is where certainty is required to keep on track and realise the vision for this unique project.

For us, the challenges in the future will be different, because to date it has been about building the community surrounding the core that brings the demand for the services that we provide in the city centre. There is no point in building a city centre if there is no-one there to use it. We have had to grow the community and stimulate the development of the region. There are now 120,000 people within a 10-minute drive of this centre who use it for its tertiary services, but over the next 30 years the real priority for us will see the focus move from creating community—which will still be a key part of it—to economic development and curating the central business district and the associated economy and jobs that go with that. That is the vision over the next 30 years. This will in turn require a greater reliance on planning and infrastructure framework to provide certainty—and I will keep coming back to that word—to the community and investors.

I want to run through a series of points, and I do apologise because it will take a little time to take you through these. Springfield City Group supports the bill. As the master developer and community builder, in partnership with others of Greater Springfield, Springfield City Group has always taken its responsibilities under the Springfield Structure Plan and the Springfield Infrastructure Agreement very seriously and has expended considerable resources in the plan-making process under the Springfield Structure Plan to ensure the appropriate curating of community outcomes with a strong focus on innovation and the generation of employment. With the bill's proposed changes to the structure plan Springfield City Group will be able to continue that process and continue to live up to the public trust that has been placed in us to deliver that community and an economic centre for job creation for the region and not just a residential project over a short period of time. We are playing a long game here. I think you heard me say there is 60 years worth of work. I have had the privilege of partly being involved with that, but it will go on for some time.

Springfield City Group supports the bill because it will clarify and preserve the integrated planning framework for Greater Springfield and ensure it continues going forward, allowing development to proceed with certainty in an orderly manner serviced by appropriate, timely infrastructure. The bill updates the respective rules of Springfield City Group as the master developer and Ipswich City Council as the assessing authority, making some appropriate changes to the planning hierarchy under the Springfield Structure Plan to ensure the hierarchy functions as well as possible going forward. The bill's passage is critical to the continued development of Greater Springfield and its important role in job creation, community building and the sustainable management of growth in not just the western corridor but also South-East Queensland more generally in relation to the provisions of the regional plan, which we are seeing as accommodated under, and delivering solutions, in terms of managing that growth sustainably.

Greater Springfield has always had an integrated planning and infrastructure framework with a master developer private company playing an important role and taking development risks. This has facilitated flexibility, scalability and adaptability and is envied by a lot of other developments around the country. This process kicked off under the state's Integrated Planning Act. We kept going. The act was amended, derivatives came into place, the Ferrari kept going, the camel came out the other end. In some respects, the provisions that were proposed for the act at those points in time allowed for a different consequence for Springfield, but not in its favour. As the act went through the state process and over time has been amended, it is delivering different solutions for different priorities across the whole of the state rather than just one specific area.

The Springfield Structure Plan commenced in 1997 and the Springfield Infrastructure Agreement commenced in 1998. The two have always worked together flexibly and reasonably seamlessly to provide a framework in response to the changing needs of the community, economy, markets and the urban environment. This was not about a point in time. Springfield started 28 years ago. If you think back to what communities expected 28 years ago, what they expect now and what they might expect in 30 years time, we need flexibility under the system to respond to the sorts of changes that present in that time.

There have been some changes in evolution over the years; for example, the responsibility for water and sewer has passed from what was then the Ipswich City Council to QUU. We were not involved in that process, but that occurred and we have been able to rectify that situation. We were a party to a contract with the council under which we provided infrastructure, but that was stepped away from and we were never included in that process. In fact, the infrastructure we provided—that the council monetised and gave to QUU as if it had been delivered by them—was provided by us with no credits back. That is a very interesting proposition, but we have hung onto the agreement because

that was the deal that was struck. I am currently duplicating our Opossum Creek trunk sewer that originally was going to cost $14 million, but with QUU getting an asset they do not have to pay for they were able to gold-plate the solution for a 100-year-plus life expectancy. It has now grown to $21 million that we are up for. We get no credits for the infrastructure that we provide, and it is trunk infrastructure.

An important characteristic of the integrated planning hierarchy is that development occurs in an orderly manner under a series of plans. We started out with 2,080 hectares of land. We needed to break that down into various sub-planning precincts. It went from strategic down to sort of suburban and the city centre, and then each of those suburban areas was broken down into smaller precincts, which were the suburbs or precinct plans, and then into smaller areas again. There is a logical hierarchy through which planning occurs from strategic down to local, and infrastructure is provided to support that.

Until 2017 there was an accepted interpretation of the Springfield Structure Plan by all of the partners and developers in Greater Springfield and Ipswich City Council. In some instances, council even refused to approve development applications because they were not consistent with the planning hierarchy. What we have done as a service—and in our role as the master developer—is a preliminary evaluation. I do not want to use terms out of the act, but as the curator if people come to us and say, 'We want to develop the land for this particular purpose,' then we look at it, we evaluate it and we make sure it is consistent with the vision. Then we implement the necessary infrastructure to support that, then consent to it and say to the council, 'We support this proposal, and we will provide the infrastructure as required from a trunk perspective to support that.' We have continued to head down the path of doing that for that period of time.

When the court cases came into play it brought some ambiguity into the planning process. For that period of time we have struggled to find a compromise in the system. We believe that the bill represents the best fix for a system that has been somewhat broken but is being put back to ensure integrity continues to operate well. The decisions had the material effect of creating uncertainty and changing the established practice and procedures that council and ourselves went through. We had really interpreted the decision of the court to reflect that, because we had been operating under that framework for 26 years. It was odd that that then became the interpretation of what was an established practice. The bill's changes to the plan-making process will reinstate that hierarchy and guarantee orderly planning, preserve the status quo and practices and processes that were before the 2017 decision, and ensure the consistent application of the planning and infrastructure framework throughout the entire development of Greater Springfield.

The framework is not outdated. I am a planning professional. I have worked for local government and I have worked for state government. I have spent the last 15 years in the private sector dedicated to doing something which is quite unique at Springfield. I find the system extremely nimble, responsible and adaptive to what the community needs. From that point of view, we are very keen to ensure that the status quo is maintained and that the system continues to operate. It is not outdated nor unnecessarily complex, as suggested by some submitters. The success of Greater Springfield as a community is testament to the responsiveness and capability of the integrated planning infrastructure framework and the important role of the master developer.

We do not have third-party appeal rights in play at Springfield. Once you plan and you implement consistent with that, unless you substantially depart from that then third-party appeal processes do not kick in. Our community does not complain about it; they are aspirational. They know what is proposed and, if anything, they are addicted to progress. 'When is the next big thing coming?' That is the sort of commentary we get from our community.

Greater Springfield has performed the role of master developer under the Springfield Structure Plan and the infrastructure agreement for nearly three decades, procuring key approvals for the land and providing and procuring most of the infrastructure that supports our project. The role of master developer saw us take on significant obligations for infrastructure to provide the necessary infrastructure—in particular, the trunk infrastructure—in a timely manner. Other landholders such as Mirvac, Cherish and other parties have all benefited from the role that we as the master developer have played because the council does not acknowledge them. They acknowledge us as the party responsible for providing that trunk infrastructure to them, so as such they are not conditioned to provide that trunk infrastructure or upgrades. We are doing that on their behalf, consistent with the sewer and water master plans. It has given them certainty and the ability to develop their projects and in fact experience substantial land valuation increases over their assets during that period of time from the certainty that has been provided.

Under the infrastructure agreement, the basic principle has been that Springfield City Group, as the master developer, has to provide most of the infrastructure inside the development boundaries under the Springfield Infrastructure Agreement. While SCG is not a statutory infrastructure provider, it has assumed that role under the guise of the agreement that was struck through the Springfield Infrastructure Agreement.

CHAIR: I will ask you to wind up so we have time for questions.

Mr Luhrs: The bill clarifies the plan-making hierarchy, confirming the implementation of an orderly planning process consistent with what has been undertaken in practice since 1998. Looking at the future, the bill provides for a new, mature revolution of the orderly plan-making process and puts it back together as best it can, acknowledging and rebuilding the important link between planning and infrastructure and the new consultation between SCG as the provider of most of the infrastructure and Ipswich City Council. The bill also makes some changes to the dispute resolution process which will make the hearing of disputes more efficient. Plus, it clarifies the relationship between certain aspects of the Planning Act and the Springfield Structure Plan. QUU, as a provider of water and sewer services, will also be able to be involved in the resolution of those issues relating to the infrastructure of its interests.

In the view of Springfield City Group, the bill represents a responsible and proportionate response to the uncertainty surrounding the integrated planning and infrastructure framework for Greater Springfield which arose as a result of the conflicting court decisions of 2017-18. Springfield City Group acknowledges the government's achievement in resolving this uncertainty in a fair and transparent way and applauds the decisive steps taken by the government to do this. The introduction of the bill follows the tradition of bilateral political support for Greater Springfield residents and businesses over several decades, with previous planning legislation assisting the Greater Springfield community and the western corridor enjoying unanimous support from all levels of government. The bill is a vote of confidence in the residents, businesses and jobs of Greater Springfield and the city of Ipswich and has an important role in accommodating growth in South-East Queensland. Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for that comprehensive opening statement. In your opening statement you did not touch on the importance of planning and infrastructure certainty. Would you expand on the benefits of that? If you did not have certainty, can you explain the consequences?

Mr Luhrs: The consequences of not having certainty are the fact that we feel a contract with the community. We have set a vision out there in the community and said, 'This is what we are going to deliver on.' We have been able to do that because the planning framework provides certainty for us as the master developer to realise that, and you are not relitigating planning matters on a case-by-case basis. Springfield was simply structured around the concept: develop a vision, establish the mechanism, consult and then implement. With that you do not get into this needless sort of process of reconsulting. We have mechanisms in place to share information with the community about what our vision is, and everyone buys into that. For us, not having certainty creates ambiguity, and certainty is important because we have written a blank cheque to provide trunk infrastructure without the nexus between planning and our role in that and the curating of that as a master developer. We have this open chequebook to provide infrastructure to support third-party interests that we have no way of recourse to. If that were to be broken, it would be akin to local authorities allowing development to occur and not charging infrastructure charges to recoup those costs in that process.

Mr KRAUSE: The bill provides Springfield with the right to comment on development applications. Can you elaborate on why that is important, and what would be the impact if you did not have that right?

Mr Luhrs: Prior to the court cases people would have to work with us around their development application and we would consent to the making of the application. In consenting to the making of the application to council we would be providing a tacit approval to the council and acknowledgement of our obligations to provide the infrastructure that services that development—not them, us. People were not paying infrastructure charges because of that. In this process we have said: if you are taking us out of the planned consent-making process, where do we fit in that to have the ability to have a say about the obligations that impact us in terms of the infrastructure we are providing? We need the ability to actually participate in that process. What has been offered here is one of consultation as opposed to an obligation.

Having said that, under the old scheme we never did not consent to the making of any application. I know Cherish preceded me in this representation. They brought an application to us that was inconsistent with our planning framework, and in providing them with preliminary assessment

we said, 'Well, it is not consistent. In fact, you have picked up all of the retail capacity based upon the established community and you have put it into your land rather than under our centre's hierarchy that has it allocated into Mirvac's land.' In that preliminary assessment we were saying, 'That is not consistent with our planning. You will need to go back and revisit that and come back with something that is consistent with our planning scheme.'

For them to be able to make that application they had to address those issues before we would consent to it. That way, when it arrives at the council they are seeing that it is generally consistent with the planning scheme—rather than the council taking on that role of that preliminary assessment process. What we are getting to now is a hybrid of that version. We do not consent to the making of it, but we will be consulted with it. There is risk in that process, but this is the compromise that has been worked through as a result of the decisions of the court. We want to be involved early, on the way through and at the end, because when development applications start what is proposed at the beginning and what comes out the end does not necessarily relate and there are consequences along that process for us with the provision of infrastructure.

Mr KRAUSE: I think it is well understood that Springfield City Group occupies a different position in the planning system at Springfield compared to other localities in their relationship with councils and other local government. Do you know what stage of development it will get to when that position that Springfield City Group is in might change?

Mr Luhrs: That is a good question. I think at a point in time the role of the master developer, as I said, will change from one of curating what is land development activity to one of economic development. We are absolutely moving into the phase now of starting to curate those 60,000 jobs that we want to accommodate in our central business district. At a point in time our role will change, but we are nowhere near that at the moment. As I said earlier, we built 18,000 dwellings of 46,000 we have preapproved. We have built about 300,000 square metres of commercial GFA. We have 2.6 million in the mix. Different elements of our project will reach a natural conclusion, I think. Over the next 15-plus years we will get to a point where the suburban areas will be built out so our focus will come on to creating the city centre, but that is a greater challenge at that point in time because we will be building apartments, as we currently are, and we will be encouraging community to think about different options in terms of living in suburban as opposed to urban environments within a greenfield setting.

To answer your question, it is evolving all the time. At a point in time we would take on a different involvement in the planning process, but in my opinion it is way out to the future. It has taken us 28 years to get to this. There is probably at least another good 20-plus years in that process, but we need that certainty to be able to propagate that.

Mrs MULLEN: Since 1997 as the master developer have you ever not provided consent to other landholders?

Mr Luhrs: We have never not provided consent to other landholders.

Mrs MULLEN: Cherish indicated to us in their testimony that consent was provided but then withdrawn; is that correct?

Mr Luhrs: I provided consent but I provided it with caveats. Cherish seem somewhat confused about what their entitlements are. Under a development agreement with Cherish we allocated them 4,000 EP within our water and sewer network to accommodate their development. That is reflected in the water and sewer master plan that QUU have approved. It sits there as their right and entitlement preserved, as it does for all other land within our project. What they asked for at that point in time was not consistent with the planning, and we told them they needed to address these matters to make sure it was consistent with our planning. One was to tell us how they were going to service their land, because they wanted to increase the density and development on their land, which we were supportive of. We want them to have as many people living there as possible, because those people will want to use the services we are going to provide in the city centre. We are all about growing the population.

What we did say to them at the end of the day, after having tried to educate them about the infrastructure agreement that they are a signatory to and the planning framework that they are a party to, was that we would provide the consent but we would caveat on these certain issues that needed to be resolved from the local authority point of view. Had I consented to it without highlighting those issues, the council would accept that I am, as the master developer, supportive of this and willing to take on all of those matters. We clearly said to them that these were the issues they needed to resolve.

We have had protracted disagreements with Cherish over the years. They have built 400 houses in the time we have built everything else. They have recently sold the site for another 500 to Stockland, who are quite happy with the Springfield integrated planning and infrastructure framework because they have been parties to other DCPs that were prepared at the same time as Springfield. North Lakes and Kawana were the other two DCPs that were done at the same time as Springfield. They get the benefit of it, and the landowner. Cherish need to understand how they can best service their land. We have recently sat down and done the work for them and told QUU how it could be done.

Mrs MULLEN: In relation to the Springfield infrastructure agreement of 1998, there is some concern that Springfield City Group may be double dipping—that is, you have accrued credits for water and sewer which you are then going to pass on to Cherish and get them to pay you so you are effectively getting a double payment.

Mr Luhrs: We have not double dipped, whatever that term is. What happens is we create a network and that network has capacity in it. We do not receive credit for that network. What Cherish were asking for was more capacity out of that network above the 4,000 EP that we had preserved for them. What we said to them was, 'If you want to buy more capacity out of a network we are building'—I am currently building a $21 million duplication of that network. 'If you want some of that capacity, you will need to compensate us for that.' They have since looked at it and they actually do not require any additional capacity. If you look at the lay of the land, it goes up and over a hill. They need to go back through the gully. It is basic planning. Their land can be developed consistent with their vision to accommodate an increased density on their site. We support that. They just do not need to put any more than 4,000 EP into the Opossum Creek trunk sewer, which we are delivering. They can service their land through other areas which we are not party to. It would be subject to them and QUU.

Ms BOLTON: That 15 minutes was a fabulous overview. You made mention of the word 'nimble'. Given that earlier we heard that the multilayered regime was problematic, can you give an example under the previous regime versus when this bill is implemented and how 'nimble' relates to both?

Mr Luhrs: With a clear vision and a hierarchy of planning instruments that take it from macro down to micro and the provision of infrastructure, you have certainty in that. If you are wanting to procreate development consistent with that, you are able to turn around approvals for buildings in very quick time. Our scheme is very nimble and quick when the planning is done consistent with it. I often use the example of our Springfield tower, a 10,000-square-metre, 10-storey, A-grade commercial office building that we operate out of. That was approved in 28 days by the local authority. We had spent probably two to three months or more in preconsultation with them about what we were going to do, but there was no holdup in that process because at the end of the day if we build a building and it is not connected to the sewer we are responsible for it and you would not do that. So the certainty is there. The scheme lays out what is required and it is very responsive to proposals that are consistent with that. As the master developer, that is what we are propagating: outcomes that are consistent with that vision. If someone comes to us and says they want to do something, we will encourage them to look at it and make sure it is consistent with the plan, which is what any local authority would do with their planning scheme. Under that framework we have the ability then to support them in the delivery of that outcome. I hope that answers your question to some extent.

Ms BOLTON: That does. Within Springfield, in terms of the consultation process with the community on what you do, do you undertake that with each development or application? How does that work?

Mr Luhrs: As I said, we do not have third-party appeal rights. When you prepare a plan and you move to implement, provided you do not step beyond that framework you are not required to put up an advertising sign saying what you are doing and inviting comment from it. We share with the community our vision, and the community that comes to Springfield are quite aspirational. They are engaged in the vision. They are looking to set themselves up and establish a future. I think the chamber of commerce spoke earlier. None of those businesses would have existed but for Springfield City Group creating this project. What we do is share information as opposed to consult. People have used our system in some ways, the dispute resolution, for vexatious reasons. Interestingly enough, the parties that do that are the ones that probably do not like it the most but it has actually given them the greatest certainty. For us, we have sought to make sure that the community is aware. We disseminate information about what is happening through social media platforms. The greatest inquiry we get is more about 'when is the next big thing coming?', not 'we don't want it'. 'Yes, in my backyard', not 'No, not in my backyard' is the scenario we get from the residents.

Mr BOOTHMAN: My question is towards transport networks and how you have actually had this whole-city approach. I have just been having a look at the maps on Google. Can you talk about how having a whole-city approach has made it easier to build transport networks? As an example, when you come to the northern Gold Coast there is a small development here, a small development there and nothing seems to interlock, whereas as I am looking at the maps of the Greater Springfield area I can see that you have the main roads going in and you have the main service roads going around. It is a great idea.

Mr Luhrs: I appreciate that question. Springfield was never planned in isolation. Most developers will look at their boundary and that is all they are interested in. From our point of view, as I said, we are a community builder and a city builder. That is the business we are in. We looked at Springfield and we asked, 'How do you get to it?' Twenty-eight years ago, the only way into Springfield was through Camira on Old Logan Road. We said, 'How do we position this opportunity to stimulate the development of the region? We need to look at how you can get to it.' We conceived of the high-order roads. If you are not aware of it, when the state government approved the Springfield DCP they also required us to build the Centenary Highway into Springfield. When I say 'build it', we had to build it from the Ipswich Motorway to the Logan Motorway through department of defence force land and then through our land. Then we advocated for it to be extended ultimately through Ripley and Yamanto. We came up with a regional road network that would service the Greater Springfield project. Then we actually had obligations to deliver parts of that. The way we approached that has assisted in securing other investment like rail to Springfield. We ultimately want our community to embrace public transport. When the government came to build rail to Springfield they did not have the costs of acquiring a corridor, because when we created the corridor we made it big enough to have a public transport solution in it.

We have started at a macro level, a strategic level of planning, and worked our way back into the project. Some say, 'Isn't it lucky all roads lead to Springfield?' No, we planned that at a regional level. Then we worked with the state government and the local authority to achieve that outcome.

Mrs MULLEN: Mirvac earlier raised an issue in relation to the retail centre hierarchy. Effectively, you have the vision, but what they are saying is that obviously they were one of the first shopping centre developers but now they are seeing a dilution of what they thought was going to be the vision for retail. Could you provide some commentary on what you think in terms of how the retail hierarchy works in Greater Springfield?

Mr Luhrs: For Greater Springfield we have a retail hierarchy. It starts with, I guess, the principal centre being the Orion Shopping Centre in the core of the city centre. It has evolved over time. It started out more as a convenience facility. It is now evolving into a destination for retail because of things that have been hubbed around it, like a train station and like the $45 million Robelle Domain Parklands—all of which they have not contributed to but have taken the uplift and benefit from. They are still by all means the principal shopping centre within our facility, a regional centre, but what we had in the hierarchy was for five neighbourhood centres which supported each of those five suburban areas around that. Each of those particular centres performs a different function to Orion but at a lower order. Mirvac have been very, I guess, protective of their interests in relation to preserving just the retail activity within Springfield, but that is in relation to a shopping centre. As the balance of the city centre starts to evolve we will start to see street based activation come in for some of these areas, so you will have your version, if you are local, of James Street, where you will have retail at a ground level and uses above it over time.

What I do note of interest is that we have sought to protect the centre's hierarchy in Springfield. When Metroplex Wacol were looking at a lot more retail in that proposition, we felt that would undermine the integrity of the regional plan and also our centre so we fought that. We asked Mirvac to join us. They did not in that process. Council then let Redbank Plains develop on the boundary of Springfield—a substantial amount of retail GFA which has diluted the Mirvac offering. We have never stepped away from the fundamental principles of protecting that centre. We want the Orion Shopping Centre to be successful. We want it to service our community and the broader region. The types of things that we are proposing about the future development of land in the area are not shopping centre related but street-level activation.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Luhrs, for your attendance at today's hearing. We found that very helpful. A transcript of these proceedings will be available on the committee's parliamentary webpage in due course. I declare this hearing closed

The committee adjourned at 1.17 pm.