

Councillor SIMMONDS:

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I rise to speak on Item A of the report, the UQ Master Plan, and just beg the Chamber's indulgence because there's quite a bit that I want to get on the record on behalf of my local constituents.

First of all, can I thank Councillor COOPER very much as the Planning Chairman, for helping me raise the profile of this issue, both within the Planning Committee and the Chamber, and for giving us just a taste of what some of council's concerns will be and no doubt they will be further fleshed out as part of the formal consultation to the State Government.

But I really want to emphasise this afternoon just what a significant issue this is for my local community in the Walter Taylor Ward, particularly for the residents of St Lucia and Indooroopilly, where the UQ campus is based.

Now, I might preference my remarks—and it's only fair—to say that I see a lot of benefits for my local community in having the UQ main campus located at St Lucia. Like Councillor COOPER, I'm an alumni myself. It's an absolutely beautiful campus that brings great prestige and pride, not just to the suburb of St Lucia but to Brisbane residents in general.

UQ as an institution adds significantly to our local economy as a major employer, as the largest participant in Brisbane's largest export market, being international education, and as a reputational beacon nationally and internationally for our city.

Its beautiful gardens, sporting fields, halls and resources are often used by the local community. People who work in UQ often live in St Lucia and many residents of St Lucia are UQ alumni themselves.

So there's an almost ingrained desire, particularly amongst St Lucia residents, to give the university the benefit of the doubt, which is why it has been so disappointing to see the way that the university has undertaken this master planning process with the St Lucia community, and the extent to which it has caused distress amongst local residents.

Before I get into the detail of what the master plan contains, it would be remiss of me not to make some comment on behalf of the community regarding the consultation. It has been disappointing to see the master plan consultation conducted by UQ, punctuated as it has been by incidents like failing to give due notice to some residents, question and answer sessions with communication consultants who frankly weren't across the detail, a minimal period of consultation and a lack of transparency about the process going forward.

It's in sharp contrast, for example, with the planning process that Council is currently undertaking with the Taringa Neighbourhood Plan, where we've had some significant engagements with local residents through those Talk to the Planner sessions.

We know that residents of St Lucia and the surrounding suburbs are very educated and knowledgeable people, most of them having been educated in UQ. A far better outcome would have been achieved if the residents had been involved in a more inclusive process.

In terms of the content of the master plan itself, the report to the committee gives a pretty reasonable summary of what is included, including a growth in

full-time equivalent student numbers of more than 14 per cent, a growth in student accommodation of 85 per cent, a growth in traffic of 20 per cent—bearing in mind that is already the second largest trip generator in our city, after the CBD—and a growth in GFA across the campus of 40 per cent.

So understandably, this seemingly predetermined plan for growth on such a scale has created significant concerns among local residents. Now, these include but aren't limited to, the increase in congestion as a result of proposed construction and other works; the bulk and scale of the development proposed by the University of Queensland in the Avalon, Hawken Drive and Long Pocket Precincts, which I note in our current City Plan is zoned low density and low to medium-density; the potential conflict of planned additional retail space on campus with existing St Lucia retail offerings; the significant expansion of on campus self-catered accommodation and the impact this will have on the viability of existing residential colleges; the lack of any consideration of the impacts on directly impacted parties from proposed infrastructure, such as the Towong Rowing Club; the preference of the plan to promote journeys by public and active transport but, as Councillor COOPER said, with absolutely no contribution to the infrastructure that's needed to achieve this kind of mode share shift by UQ.

The lack of planning with regards to infrastructure issues, or social and environmental issues, including parking, noise, water supply, transport and traffic; and the lack of inclusion of professional recommendations made by the heritage architect Andrew Laidley and recognition of Avalon Theatre's Heritage listing and preservation and the need to preserve the original theatre.

These are the concerns of the residents, and there's many, many more. But I suppose the greatest concern of them all, both for myself, us as a Council, and for local residents, is the proposal, as Councillor COOPER has alluded to, for the master plan to extend the University of Queensland's development exemption boundaries into St Lucia and the Indooroopilly suburbs.

So the community infrastructure designation, or CID as it's known, is approved by the State Government. It allows UQ, within those boundaries, to undertake growth for educational and associated purposes without any further reference back to Council, to the City Plan or to residents. It exempts UQ from any infrastructure charges or from any community infrastructure contributions that might ordinarily have been conditioned on such a development.

It exempts UQ from having to lodge a DA, from having to display that DA publicly online via PD Online, from further community consultation that they'd normally have to do as part of the DA process, and from the community appeal rights that might have ordinarily had been in place as part of a DA process.

Now, while this is an entrenched situation already occurring within the well-established UQ campus, the community naturally fears that if the university can continue to buy up land within the suburbs proper, and simply have the CID extended into these properties, that this will be an intolerable situation for both myself and the local community.

It removes the ability for local residents to have a say over what is built in great chunks of our suburb and removes the level playing field provided by Council and the *Sustainable Planning Act* that all developers have to abide by.

What's most affronting is that the process to approve the expanded CID boundaries was commenced by UQ with the State Government before their own community consultation period was concluded and before the UQ Senate had reviewed the community feedback on the master plan. This is incredibly disappointing from an institution with a reputation like UQ's.

For my part, I have made a submission to UQ on behalf of the local community, making it clear that I oppose the extension of the CID boundaries. I have today made a similar submission to the State Government department, who are currently considering that CID extension. I have encouraged my community through e-newsletters, the local paper, multiple TV news stories and the local

community association to likewise make submissions to oppose the approval of the CID expansion by the State Government.

I'd like to thank the St Lucia Community Association for their hard work and tireless efforts to assist myself and the community to this end. They've done a sterling job spreading the word and encouraging people to write to the UQ Senate and to the State Government to voice their concerns.

So ultimately, the decision on whether or not to remove these rights for residents will be made by the Education Minister Kate Jones. I know the State member, Scott Emerson, has invited Minister Jones to speak with members of the community association and she's agreed to do that, very graciously. So I hope that it is a fruitful discussion.

Madam Chairman, I just conclude by strongly urging the UQ Senate and the State Government to heed the message of the local community and myself and reconsider some of the proposals they put forward in the master plan, especially to reject the expansion of the CID. Thank you.

Chairman:

Further debate?