

MEDIA RELEASE

Caroline Le Couteur MLA, ACT Greens Planning Spokesperson

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More exciting planning improvements to avoid Arthur Dent situation

The passage of the *Planning and Building Legislation Amendment Bill (No 2)* today is another step towards improving community consultation and notification requirements, says ACT Greens Planning Spokesperson, Caroline Le Couteur MLA.

“I have heard many concerns from the community over the past few years about lack of consultation in regard to the development application process. I first proposed a number of improvements in my *Planning and Development (Notifications and Review) Amendment Bill 2009*, many of which were subsequently picked up by the Government’s *Planning and Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2011(PABLAB)*.

“I proposed a number of amendments to the PABLAB to further improve notification requirements, as well as the pre-development application community consultation process. These proposals are reflected in this PABLAB (No 2) Bill today.

The Bill passed today does two key things:

- makes the pre-development application consultation process mandatory for larger developments; and
- requires signs where building work is being undertaken – in advance of the work being carried out, to notify nearby residents of upcoming work, as well as while the work is being undertaken.

“I am pleased that the Government has agreed to make pre-DA consultation mandatory for proponents. This is a win-win situation for both developers and the community, as it gives them opportunity to work together to improve the proposal, saving time and money further down the planning process.

“The other issue this bill addresses is the Arthur Dent situation*, by ensuring a neighbourhood knows when a house or garage is about to be demolished or built. This refers to impending developments which didn’t need public notification along the development approval process.

“I have also proposed an amendment to improve information on signs for DAs for lease variations – those signs now basically say nothing about the proposed changes. I am glad that the Government agrees that people would really rather see the detail of what is being proposed,

rather than just being told to look on a website.

“Getting the balance between community consultation and notification and unrealistic requirements on proponents is very important, but I am pleased that this bill passed today makes substantial improvements to informing and consulting with the community,” said Ms Le Couteur.

* Arthur Dent, from *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, wakes up one day to find bulldozers about to demolish his house to make room for a highway. Not only this, but Earth was to be demolished to make way for an intergalactic space highway. When Arthur asked the aliens why no one on Earth had been notified, they responded by saying that it had actually been in the galaxy notifications, it's just a pity that Earthlings don't have access to those communications channels.