

## NORTH STONEVILLE DEVELOPMENT

### *Statement*

**HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN (East Metropolitan)** [5.36 pm]: I rise tonight to make a statement about a completely different matter from Hon Michael Mischin, across the chamber.

Although today is not the best example, it has been getting warmer—as we have all probably noticed—as we get inevitably closer to summer. It was 36.5 degrees on Sunday, 28 degrees on Saturday, 32 degrees on the previous Sunday, and, undoubtedly, it will get hotter as we go along. As the weather heats up, of course, bushfires become more of a concern, especially for my constituents who live in the Perth hills, within the East Metropolitan Region. There is some lovely bushland in the hills, right the way along, but with bush comes the risk of fires, and the people in the Shire of Mundaring know this all too well.

The shire is the fifth most fire-prone local government area in Australia, with 38 per cent of addressees being at high risk of bushfires. In January 2014, 57 homes were destroyed by the fires that ravaged Parkerville, Stoneville and Mt Helena. The Mundaring community is incredibly vigilant about the risk of bushfires and that is one reason there has been significant community concerns about a proposed development north of Stoneville. Structure plan 34, otherwise known as north Stoneville, is a development proposed by Satterley on land owned by the Anglican Diocese of Perth. If the proposed development comes to fruition, it will result in approximately 4 000 extra residents in the Shire of Mundaring, with over 1 400 lots to be put in place. Additionally, it would feature commercial retail space, a primary school, a secondary school and some public open space. The proposal has been in the works since the early 1990s, and significant progress was made in November 2016 when the lots covered by SP 34 were zoned urban. However, it is concerning that much of the development takes place in an area that is deemed to have a bushfire attack level of 40—otherwise known as a flame zone. This, among other things, has led to the re-formation of the Save Perth Hills group. This is a large group of community members, concerned about the impact of these new developments, particularly developments the size of north Stoneville. The group has held a number of rallies since December 2018. More than a thousand people turned out to a rally in the Mundaring Community Sculpture Park in April to rally against this particular plan. Those concerns are shared by the Mundaring shire council, which unanimously resolved at a special council meeting on 27 August to recommend that the Western Australian Planning Commission refuse structure plan 34. In making its recommendation, the shire considered 957 submissions from the public, 823 of which were opposed to the development for a number of reasons. The shire outlined the reasons for its recommendation in a letter provided to the Minister for Planning, which I was also copied into. Within that letter it said that it was concerned that traffic generated by the proposed development would exacerbate road network capacity constraints and would take place in an area considered to have a bushfire attack level of 40. The shire was also concerned that the necessary environmental approvals had not been undertaken, there would be a lack of public transport and a number of issues would have to be resolved in relation to the sewage treatment plant dam. It noted that any leaching from the dam might directly affect existing properties that use bore water and that the water might also leach into the Swan River valley catchment area.

I, like the Save Perth Hills group and many other members of the community, am concerned that this development will dramatically exacerbate the risks posed by bushfires to lives and homes, particularly given the impact it would have on the traffic network around those parts of the hills. I note that the City of Swan, which is a neighbouring local government area, is also opposed to the development because much of the resulting increase in the number of cars and traffic would impact on its local road network as well. It is a concern to me that the shire is suggesting that the increased traffic from the development would overwhelm the local road network, because it is bad enough during regular periods now. I would hate to imagine what it would be like in the midst of a bushfire emergency.

It is also concerning to me that 94 per cent of Perth councils continue to fail to meet their urban infill targets, as revealed in September 2018 by WAtoday. A greater effort must be made by local councils to achieve infill. Perth cannot simply continue to sprawl out at the margins and it cannot afford to sprawl into increasingly risky areas like north Stoneville. I had the opportunity to be a guest at the RAC event that was held on Monday morning, to which I suspect many members were also invited, and to listen to the guest speaker, Canadian writer and urbanist Charles Montgomery. Mr Montgomery talked, amongst other things, about happy cities, urban design and density. He said that evidence supports appropriate increases in density, as this actually results in better social and economic outcomes for people. He said that cities like Perth that continue to build on their fringes are building into infrastructure problems that are very difficult to overcome—they end up having more roads, more traffic and unhappier people. Evidence shows that it affects lifespan and general health as well. I do not think anybody would argue that the Shire of Mundaring is anything other than on the fringe of the City of Perth. A development on the fringe of the city of that magnitude—4 000 people—is certainly not consistent with some of the more modern thinking on urban design and community building.

I also take this opportunity to commend the good work of my friend the member for Kalamunda, Mr Matt Hughes, in advocating for the local community on this very issue. Of course, Mr Hughes has a particular insight that most of us do not have, being particularly well connected to the Anglican Diocese of Perth through his time as the principal of John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School. He was in that position for 20 years. I do not profess to have that level of insight into the Anglican diocese, but he certainly does. As the member for Kalamunda reflected in a grievance in the other place in early September —

If an amended plan that reduces the scale of the project and addresses the concerns of the shire council is not achievable on commercial grounds, arguably this ... project is not suitable for the hills.

I certainly endorse that statement of Mr Hughes that this development must be consistent with the amenity of that place and be built on a scale that takes into account the impacts on the environment. It certainly needs to take into account the impacts on the bushfire risks that continue up there.