

Civic leaders want accurate forecasts to manage population growth

We're playing catch-up

Jane Chudleigh

SOUTHEAST Queensland's civic leaders have backed the region's current population plan, but all agree that it needs fine-tuning.

The leaders, speaking at last night's public forum on the state's development, said the accuracy of future projections were crucial.

Sunshine Coast Mayor Bob Abbot said projections should not be based on past figures.

"We need to base the population planning on science," he said.

"Base it on rules we can deal with – something we know is sustainable."

Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman said government funding had not kept pace with population growth.

"I think we need to be clear for every 100 families that come to the region, there will be an appetite for a certain number of detached homes and apartment buildings. I'm not confident we've got the mix right," he said.

"I'm not confident we can fund the infrastructure needed in the plan (South East Queensland Regional Plan 2004). I go back to the federal government; they're the ones shovelling them through the door, and people like the premier and mayors then have to deal with it."

Premier Anna Bligh said past inaction had meant current administrations were constantly trying to catch up with the booming growth in Queensland.

"Political pressure to maintain the status quo is growing, and local councils and state government are grappling with the real politics on the ground as the plan gets rolled out and starts to take shape," she said.

Ms Bligh said an additional population the size of Darwin (about



IN THE FRAME: Premier Anna Bligh addresses the 'Our Future, Your Say' forum last night. **Picture:** Rob Maccoll

115,000) had to be accommodated in the state's southeast every year.

Ms Bligh and Cr Newman, along with fellow panellists Cr Abbot and Griffith University urban planning professor Brendan Gleeson, debated the state's population growth before a crowd of about 400 at the Conservatorium of Music last night.

The event was the first of a series of

public forums on population growth organised by *The Courier-Mail* in partnership with Griffith University and the Brisbane Institute.

The Government has already flagged the development of a state population policy, and will hold a summit on the issue at the end of next month.

As part of a push to spread popu-

lation growth more evenly throughout Queensland, Ms Bligh has proposed a boost to the first home owners' grant for people who commit to living outside the state's southeast corner.

The Government has also said it would shift some departments out of Brisbane.

Miss the forum? Catch a replay at couriermail.com.au/indepth

What they said

Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman:

'The regional plan isn't broke, but we do have a few things to fix. The primary concern is the issue of affordability.'

Sunshine Coast Regional Mayor Bob Abbot:

'We have a chance in Southeast Queensland to take this population monster by the throat and actually do something with it that can make a difference. We need to listen to our communities about what they want. We need to make sure that along the way those communities are sustainable.'

Premier Anna Bligh:

'We are grappling once again with the reality that despite these very comprehensive and genuine attempts to plan for what we think is happening, there is a fracturing of the community consensus around these planning instruments. Political pressure to maintain the status quo is growing and local councils and State Government are grappling with the real politics on the ground as the plan gets rolled out and starts to take shape.'

Logan City plans Springfield-style satellite at Greater Flagstone

Sarah Vogler

AN area earmarked for one of the biggest population explosions in southeast Queensland will be developed as a self-contained satellite city similar to Springfield.

The 4000-strong Greater Flagstone population, west of Jimboomba, will explode to 130,000 in just 21 years.

And Logan City Council yesterday revealed just what that community will look like.

Planning and Development Committee Chairwoman, Councillor Cherie Dalley said three options were put to the community before council made its decision.

"The Centres based approach encourages a self-contained develop-

ment pattern through the creation of communities with a desirable mix of centre activities and dispersed local employment opportunities," Cr Dalley said.

Design will encourage residents to live, work and play in their local area, taking the strain off overloaded transport infrastructure in the area.

Cr Dalley said Greater Flagstone

was one of three major areas within Logan earmarked for major development.

"Currently Greater Flagstone is home to approximately 4000 people but in the future it is expected to house more than 130,000 people," she said.

Council's next step will be to investigate priority infrastructure needed to service the massive growth

predicted including public transport.

Cr Dalley said the consultation gave the community input into the planning.

"What we have just done is not a mandatory requirement, instead it is something we chose to do to involve the community early so that when we go through the next (statutory phase) there shouldn't be any big surprises."