

~~To ensure the continued operation of the FRC for a further 12 months, amendments to the FRC act need to be passed and given assent or proclaimed prior to the expiry of the current act on 1 January 2013. The appointment or re-appointment of commission and board members will also be required. Extending the operation of the FRC for a year will provide continued support for the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority in the trial communities and improve the wellbeing of community members. The Cape York Welfare Reform trial is driven by a basic principle, which underlies the Newman government's Indigenous agenda—that state government programs and funding are directed towards improving the stability and sustainability of Indigenous communities. Our focus is on overcoming disadvantage by providing support and structures which enable communities to achieve better social and economic outcomes in areas like health, housing, education and employment. I look forward to continuing to work with the Commonwealth government and Indigenous communities in the pursuit of one aim: assisting Indigenous Queenslanders to secure a better standard of living and quality of life. I commend the bill to the House.~~

First Reading



~~Hon. GW ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (3.38 pm): I move—~~

~~That the bill be now read a first time.~~

~~Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.~~

~~Motion agreed to.~~

~~Bill read a first time.~~

Referral to the Health and Community Services Committee

~~Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Community Services Committee.~~

WATER LEGISLATION (DAM SAFETY AND WATER SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Hon. MF McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (3.38 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Electricity Act 1994, the Water Act 2000, the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Regulation 2011 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Water Legislation (Dam Safety and Water Supply Enhancement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012.

Tabled paper: Water Legislation (Dam Safety and Water Supply Enhancement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 explanatory notes.

The Water Legislation (Dam Safety and Water Supply Enhancement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill implements a number of the recommendations of the final report of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry delivered in March 2012, and also reduces the regulatory burden on some of the water services industry.

The government responded to the commission's final report of 7 June 2012 by committing to implement all 177 recommendations. This bill demonstrates that the government has taken swift action to deliver on the changes needed to improve Queensland's preparedness to deal with future floods or other disasters.

The government acknowledges the pain and suffering caused by the devastating floods of 2010-11 and that some people are still going through the process of rebuilding their lives. The initiatives in this bill will help the community to be better informed and better prepared for any similar events in the future.

This bill addresses nine dam safety recommendations. It will provide a more transparent regulatory framework to govern dams and will improve resilience and engagement between owners of referable dams—those that potentially pose a risk to people if they were to fail—and local communities.

The bill amends the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to introduce objective criteria to assist the minister determine which water supply dams with sufficient flood storage capacity should be operated under an approved flood mitigation manual. The bill provides for the responsible minister to consider the criteria in nominating dams as flood mitigation dams. This will provide clarity on the purpose of flood mitigation manuals and will provide a sound platform for consideration of the outcomes

of detailed operational studies being undertaken into optimising the operations of the Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine dams.

The bill stipulates the content for a flood mitigation manual and establishes the minister as the approving authority for flood mitigation manuals, as recommended by the Floods Commission of Inquiry. This is appropriate given the importance of decisions about flood mitigation manuals to the downstream communities, especially along the Brisbane River. It also ensures that future manuals appropriately balance key objectives such as minimising risk to human life and property from controlled flood releases and avoiding the more catastrophic risks that would arise in the extremely rare event that the dam were to fail.

Until now, much of the dam safety regulatory framework has rested on dam safety conditions imposed individually on dam owners. This bill will make the framework more transparent to the community and more robust by replacing some of these conditions with universal obligations. One such obligation is the requirement to prepare emergency action plans. These plans outline how a dam owner is to respond to an emergency and how communities affected will be notified of emergencies. The bill will require all owners of referable dams to prepare emergency action plans, which are to be submitted to the Department of Energy and Water Supply for approval after review by the chairperson of the relevant local or district disaster management group. The dam owner will be obliged to review their emergency action plan every year to ensure the currency of plans prior to each wet season and to resubmit them at least every five years.

The bill establishes requirements for access to, publishing of and control of the emergency action plans. A central website will be established for 24-hour public access to the current approved plans. These provisions respond to the need for the community to have access to accurate information about flood risks and will ensure that dam safety and emergency management arrangements are well integrated and current.

The bill streamlines the provisions for declaring temporary full-supply levels for relevant dams to mitigate potential droughts or floods and moves them from the Water Act 2000 to the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008. This will align responsibility for decisions about dam safety and flood mitigation under the one act and reflect the government's intention to amalgamate the bulk water supply entities and abolish the Queensland Water Commission.

Consistent with the government's commitment to reducing regulatory burden, this bill will defer and reduce the regulatory burden on the water industry by reducing the requirements for low-risk providers to submit certain plans and by reducing the need for small dam owners to undertake failure impact assessments for dams that pose no obvious risk to the public. Ultimately, the bill serves to enhance Queensland's regulatory frameworks to deliver appropriate risk based outcomes for community safety and security.

The bill also addresses the increasing cost to Queensland business and households of the Queensland Solar Bonus Scheme. With more than 500 megawatts of small scale solar capacity connected to the Queensland electricity grid, the Queensland Solar Bonus Scheme has done its job of stimulating the solar industry and making solar power more affordable for Queenslanders. Since the scheme commenced in June 2008, the number of solar photovoltaic installations has increased from 1,200 systems to more than 205,000 systems in July 2012. The rapid uptake of the solar bonus has driven up the costs associated with the scheme to its 2028 end date. These costs were estimated in 2011 to be about \$1.8 billion. Higher-than-forecast uptake to June this year suggests that this figure will be conservative. These costs are passed through to Queensland household power bills, meaning that those without solar may face a hike in their electricity bill to pay for their neighbour's system.

The government is committed to reducing cost-of-living burdens on Queensland households, and this means putting in place cost-saving measures for the scheme. On 25 June 2012 I announced that the solar feed-in tariff would drop from 44c to 8c for new customers from 10 July 2012. I also announced that there would be further changes to legislation later this year to end current practices that transfer the 44c tariff between property owners and tenants. This change is expected to limit scheme costs to 2028 by more than \$300 million. Passing this bill will amend the Electricity Act 1994 to provide the framework for these important cost reductions. The changes will mean that customers on the 44c tariff must retain the electricity account in their name to continue receiving the 44c. Of course, we will be making an exception to allow name changes between spouses.

The changes will also introduce sunset provisions requiring customers who have applied for the 44c tariff to install their photovoltaic system by 30 June 2013. New property owners and tenants who inherit a solar photovoltaic system under the new arrangements or who miss the 30 June 2013 deadline can still save money on their electricity bills and receive 8c per kilowatt hour for their excess power, provided they meet the eligibility requirements for that tariff. The bill will also provide for an end date in regulation of 1 July 2014 for the 8c tariff and update scheme review provisions and requirements for how it is reported. Supporting amendments to the electricity regulation will be required to implement the government's cost-saving measures in full. These will be progressed subject to parliament's consideration of the bill.

This government is committed to easing pressure on household budgets and delivering savings on energy and water across the state. This is yet another step we are taking in the right direction. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading



Hon. MF McARDLE (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (3.46 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.

~~ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL~~

~~Resumed from 19 June (see p. 745).~~

Second Reading



~~**Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (3.47 pm): I move—~~

~~That the bill be now read a second time.~~

~~Before debate on this bill commences, I wish to reiterate some key points that I made in my explanatory speech. The Animal Care and Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 delivers on the government's election promise to amend the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 to bring Queensland into line with other states. Queensland is the only Australian jurisdiction with animal welfare legislation that expressly exempts from its application dealing with animals according to Aboriginal tradition or Islander custom. This bill seeks to ensure that animal welfare obligations apply to persons who deal with animals under Aboriginal tradition or Torres Strait Islander custom. The bill balances the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in maintaining their traditional and customary practices and the expectations of the broader community, including many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, about animal welfare.~~

~~Recent media reports of methods used by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to hunt dugong and turtles raised concern earlier this calendar year that the current exemption is too easily exploited by some rogue hunters who have no regard for animal welfare. For at least 10 years prior to that, animal welfare interest groups and others, including some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, have voiced concerns about the cruelty of some hunting of sea turtles and dugong and the immunity from prosecution for animal cruelty that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are afforded by the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 if they are hunting in accordance with tradition or custom.~~

~~The bill will not extinguish native title rights to hunt nor will it rescind any other hunting rights. The bill will regulate how those hunting rights are exercised. The bill demonstrates that this government is serious about acting to protect Queensland's iconic dugong and turtle populations.~~

~~I note that the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee conducted an inquiry into this bill. It produced a report on the bill, which was tabled in parliament on 2 July. I am pleased to say that, in its report on the bill, the committee recommended that the bill be passed. I thank the committee and the stakeholders who participated in the inquiry for their careful examination of the bill. I table the Queensland government's response to report No. 5 on the Animal Care and Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012.~~

~~Tabled paper: Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee : Report No. 5—Animal Care and Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012: Government response.~~

~~I also wish to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders who participated in consultation meetings about the bill during July and those who provided written submissions on the bill. I wish to alert members of the House of my intention to move a number of amendments to the bill during the consideration in detail stage. These amendments follow the government's consideration of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee's report into the bill and additional consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders since that time. The government acknowledges the~~