


Other numbers of interest highlighting the outstanding work between June 2012 and June 2014 are: reduced elective surgery long waitlist, category 1, 130 down to zero; category 2, 1,108 down to 319; category 3, 286 down to 59. On top of that, the PA has had a 19 per cent improvement in the National Emergency Access Target, which is the greatest improvement in the country. The workload of the PA must not be understated. There are 88,417 admissions each year, with 60,614 emergency presentations.

Turning to the QEII hospital, in November 2013 it opened a major expansion which included the redeveloped emergency department and new endoscopy unit. In March 2014, 91 per cent of patients were satisfied with the overall quality of care. In January 2014, stage 2 of the palliative unit was completed, including a new family room, consultant room and overnight stay room for families. In June 2014, by redesigning the clinical processes the QEII improved its performance in the National Elective Surgery Target by 29 per cent compared to the previous year. I could go on. Overall we cannot forget the reduction of the dental long waitlist in the metro south area from 6,758 in June 2013 down to zero.

Again I would like to sincerely thank all those who have played a part in turning the ship around and achieving those fabulous results. It is sad when some still chose to criticise Queensland Health with off the cuff, ill formed comments which are usually for political gain. I am proud of the work of the Metro South Hospital and Health Board and all the staff. I do think that when political candidates criticise these two great hospitals, they are actually criticising the great work of the staff within. The results speak for themselves.

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (3.58 pm): Following on from other speakers who have spoken of White Ribbon Day, I would also like to speak about the statistics of domestic violence in my area. The Capricornia Police District includes Biloela, Gladstone, Gracemere, Mount Morgan, North Rockhampton, Rockhampton, Blackwater, Emerald, Woorabinda and Yeppoon. Incidents of domestic and family violence are projected to increase by 10.9 per cent in the 2013-14 financial year. The Capricorn district is currently 97.4 per cent above the state reported average rate for DV incidents.

031 Over the past five years the following trends have been observed. Breaches of Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act orders have increased by 85 per cent. Calls for service for DFV incidents have increased by 89 per cent. During the period 2012-13 the following statistics were captured for the Capricornia police district. A total of 1,223 persons—that is, 0.5 per cent of people—were responsible for 1,401 offences. Of these, 82 per cent were male perpetrators compared to 18 per cent who were female perpetrators. Those increases are generally reflected in my electorate of Gladstone.

It is such a regrettable thing. I think state wide there is an increase, thankfully, in the reporting of domestic violence but also, very sadly, an increase in the incidence. I commend the Premier and this government for establishing the domestic violence task force. I am certainly, along with other government and non-government members who have been appointed to that committee, looking forward to the opportunity to work with Dame Quentin Bryce and other community representatives on what will, I believe, be a very challenging issue.

We do have, however, businesses, both large and small, in my electorate, and I am sure elsewhere, who are equally working with their employees to raise consciousness about domestic violence and to equip and empower their workers. One such large company is Boyne Smelters Ltd, who have a special project, if you like, for a white ribbon initiative in November. I commend Boyne Smelters and all of those companies who work together to heighten awareness and prevention.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Report

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (4.01 pm), by leave: I table Ethics Committee report No. 148 titled *2013-14 annual report*. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 148—2013-2014 Annual Report.

WATER REFORM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.01 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Water Act 2000, the Alcan Queensland Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1965, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Regulation 2001, the Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1957, the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Mineral Resources Regulation 2013, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the River Improvement Trust Act 1940 and the Vegetation Management Act 1999 for particular purposes, to amend the statutory instruments mentioned in part 10 for particular purposes, to make minor or consequential amendments of the legislation mentioned in schedule 1, and to make minor amendments of the water resource plans mentioned in schedule 2. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014.

Tabled paper: Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes.

I am pleased to present the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 to the House. The primary purpose of the bill is to ensure the state's water resources are used responsibly and productively for the benefit of all Queenslanders while retaining certainty and security for existing water entitlement holders and balancing economic, social and environmental outcomes.

The Water Act 2000 is the primary framework for the planning, allocation and management of water in Queensland. However, it is now more than 13 years old. The previous Labor government was not interested in simplifying the act and was more inclined to increase regulation and make it harder to operate. The Newman government, on the other hand, believes it is vital that Queensland's water resource management legislation keeps pace with current best practice standards, innovations in service delivery and technology.

The bill forms part of a whole-of-water-business transformation being delivered by the Queensland government which will deliver an efficient, effective and modern water resource management framework and support the growth of the agriculture and resources sectors and create economic development opportunities for rural and regional Queensland.

The bill establishes a new overarching purpose for the Water Act: setting the direction for water resource management in Queensland. It has been realigned to deliver an efficient regulatory framework for the responsible and productive management and use of water and riverine quarry resources in Queensland that facilitates strong uptake of water resource development opportunities and strikes the appropriate balance between delivering on social, economic and environmental values for communities across the state.

In recognition that water is critical in the economic development of Queensland, whether it be through the resources or agriculture sectors, the new purpose will guide the Water Act to provide an improved framework to facilitate the operation of efficient water markets across Queensland. The new purpose will continue to recognise the importance of sustaining ecosystem health, water quality and water dependent ecological processes and biological diversity associated with catchments, watercourses, lakes, springs, aquifers and other natural systems. The Newman government is committed to ensuring that impacts on underground water from resource activities are managed fairly and consistently.

The bill expands chapter 3 of the Water Act to ensure that a statutory make-good obligation applies for any landholder whose water supply bore may be affected as a result of mining operations. Currently, such rights only apply to those situations where a bore is affected by petroleum and gas operations. This will ensure landholders have statutory certainty that any impacts to their bore water supply will be remedied in an agreed manner.

The cumulative management area framework under this chapter will also be amended to ensure the impacts of mining operations are appropriately managed where it is predicted that they will have cumulative impacts on underground water resources. The Galilee Basin in Central Queensland is the primary area where existing assessments have indicated a cumulative management area declaration may be beneficial to allow the potential cumulative impacts of future coalmines on groundwater aquifers to be appropriately assessed and managed. While the decision to declare a cumulative management area for the Galilee Basin will be a future decision by government, the bill provides a framework to manage cumulative impacts.

Importantly, any mines currently operating in the existing Surat cumulative management area will not become regulated as a tenure to which the cumulative management area applies. This is because it is considered that the impacts of existing mines do not contribute to overlapping impacts on groundwater associated with coal seam gas operations.

While these particular amendments will increase the level of regulation pertaining to groundwater resources, they will be offset by amendments to the Mineral Resources Act 1989 to remove the requirement for these tenure holders to obtain a licence or permit for taking water. The amendments will further minimise the regulatory burden, with new powers to establish an exemption from reporting requirements for low-risk activities in both the mining and the petroleum and gas sectors. The regulatory burden on existing tenures would also be minimised through an exemption from the requirement to produce a baseline assessment plan or an underground water impact report if they are located in an area where the take of underground water is presently unregulated or if they already hold a licence or permit to take.

Unlike the former Labor government, the Newman government understands the need for managing underground water impacts from resource activities to ensure the community has confidence in the management of our water resources. The bill also amends both the Mineral Resources Act 1989 and the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 1984 to establish a consistent framework to manage the resource sector's access to underground water.

For the first time, the take of water by the petroleum and gas sector, other than where the water is taken as a necessary by-product of the extraction of petroleum and gas, will be managed under the Water Act planning management and allocation framework, which currently applies to all other sectors. This means the petroleum and gas sector will need to abide by the same rules as everyone else when they are taking groundwater for non-associated purposes such as providing water for workers camps, dust suppression, constructing and testing infrastructure or developing production wells. This reform is particularly important as the sector looks to expand its operations into areas such as the Cooper Basin, where the Great Artesian Basin is the primary water supply source for pastoralists and local communities.

032 I am committed to working constructively with the gas industry to ensure it can transition into the new framework with as little disruption as possible and that its existing rights are managed appropriately while ensuring this valuable resource is managed responsibly. Firstly, a transitional period of two years will be provided to allow existing petroleum tenure holders sufficient time to comply with the new arrangements. This will be extended to five years within the Surat Basin cumulative management area. Secondly, exemptions from the requirement to obtain a water licence or permit for low-risk activities will be provided by way of regulation, and this work will be progressed in parallel with the amendments to the act. Thirdly, during the transitional period, the existing use of water for non-associated purposes by the petroleum and gas sector and its legitimate future water requirements will be recognised by granting an authorisation under the Water Act through a streamlined process so that they can continue beyond this transitional period. Finally, a water supply strategy will be developed for managing areas of water demand for the petroleum and gas sector, such as the Cooper Basin, and this will be incorporated into a review of relevant water plans such as the Great Artesian Basin water resource plan. This will ensure the plans recognise and address the water requirements of this sector alongside other sectors and provide a basis for future development to proceed.

The new framework will increase the security of supplies for all water users. The Newman government is committed to supporting the growth of a strong and productive petroleum and gas sector. To achieve this, my department will work collaboratively with the sector and other stakeholders during this transition period to ensure they have a clear and certain pathway to secure the water supplies they need without unnecessarily compromising the needs of water entitlement holders, the wider community and the environment. The bill also transforms the water planning framework into a more efficient and easier to understand regulatory framework characterised by a catchment based water plan, which will be subordinate legislation, that specifies allocation and management of water resources of a river basin or aquifer system. Operational matters, such as water sharing rules, will be contained in either a water management protocol for unsupplemented water or an operations manual for water supply schemes. This framework provides a more flexible structure to ensure scheme operators and the government can respond in an effective and timely manner to the changing water resource requirements of a river basin or aquifer system. The new processes to amend or establish these regulatory plans are more efficient and flexible and will

significantly reduce the time taken to undertake planning activities. Robust science, clear outcomes and strong community engagement remain key features of the water planning process.

The changes to chapter 2 of the Water Act will also provide for the accelerated conversion of water licences to tradeable water allocations through a suite of more efficient statutory instruments to deliver a fully realised water market by 2017. The new framework will continue to allow the government to engage in focused and targeted consultation with local communities on proposals to deliver tradeable allocations on a catchment basis. Introducing trading in catchments provides increased opportunities for users to access available water and promotes economic growth and development while still protecting the security of existing entitlements. The bill also amends the Water Act to remove the requirement to obtain many licences where the risk to the sustainability of the resource is low. Additionally, it will allow a water plan or a regulation to set thresholds in particular areas to remove the requirement for a water licence, for a certain take of or to interfere with water.

The bill will also provide for the development of a watercourse identification map to provide clearer and easily accessible information for users. The bill streamlines the process for water licences by amending the Water Act to ensure changes to a water licence that do not impact the resource are not required to follow a lengthy and unnecessarily complex assessment process. On average, around 550 applications are received each year across Queensland for changes to water licences. It is estimated that at least 75 per cent of these applications will now be able to follow the new simple dealing process, removing the need to advertise and saving customers up to \$1,500 for each application and significantly reducing the time taken for a decision to be made. The new framework will significantly streamline the water licence process, allowing licence holders to do business more efficiently and deliver an outcome for our customers in a more timely fashion. The framework for the release of unallocated water is being reformed to allow faster access to unallocated water and a more rapid response from government to emerging water demands. The bill and supporting subordinate legislation will allow for unallocated water to be reserved outside a water plan area and will also significantly simplify the process and time frames for releasing unallocated water.

The bill amends the Water Act to establish a process to transition and normalise special agreement act water rights into the Water Act framework by negotiation and agreement with the relevant resource companies. The transition of these rights will provide more consistency in the allocation and management of the state's water and more clarity of water rights for those relevant companies. The bill proposes to amend the Water Act to introduce a 'water development option' which provides a process for the government to give a commitment of access to water resources for coordinated projects, where appropriate and at an early stage in the environmental impact assessment process, to facilitate the responsible development of large scale projects requiring water resources. The amendments will also enable the minister to amend a water plan, if appropriate, to implement the outcomes of an environmental impact statement process by reserving unallocated water for a large scale project. This will provide more certainty for developers and will encourage and facilitate greater private sector involvement in major water infrastructure developments.

The bill includes a number of amendments to the Water Act to cut red tape and provide more flexibility for category 2 water authorities to operate more efficiently and autonomously. These amendments include support for the transition of water authorities to alternative institutional arrangements, including the provision of transitional supply contracts to allow these entities to continue to rate and charge, provide disclosure statements for a prospective water allocation buyer in a distribution scheme and allow more flexible board proceedings. The bill also makes a number of amendments to the River Improvement Trust Act 1940 to contemporise the language in the act, reduce red tape for trusts in carrying out their activities and streamline many of the existing provisions in the act where other laws take precedence. These amendments include improving the processes for commencing, amending, amalgamating or dissolving existing trusts. The act is being amended to overhaul the constitution and membership of trusts to allow a much more flexible approach to forming a river improvement trust area, naming it and deciding on the structure for the board of such a river management body. These amendments will also recognise the ability of a board to formally appoint subcommittees to provide expert advice to the board as and when required. Significantly, the act has been modernised through amendments to the long title of the act and its objects to allow trusts to invest in a broader range of activities necessary to act on erosion issues and improve water quality. This will allow trusts to work cooperatively with landowners and other catchment groups to plan for and implement activities beyond the bed and banks of a watercourse. For example, the trust may wish to collaborate to implement works to address gully or stream bank erosion by working with

landowners to implement best practice sediment management practices. However, to be clear, the work of the trusts must focus on activities that directly benefit the health and resilience of rivers.

New development opportunities will also be opened up in Cape York Peninsula, with access to 9,800 megalitres of unallocated water reserves through amendments to the Great Artesian Basin water resource plan included in the bill. The availability of this water has been determined in a robust manner as a result of a thorough technical assessment undertaken by my department over the last 12 months and in consultation with local communities. The bill also makes a number of critical miscellaneous amendments, including provision to enable the surrender of a water allocation, to remove the reversal of the onus of proof to ensure standard prosecution principles apply for water related offences; providing more flexibility regarding public notices; removing the requirement for a second authorisation for embankments or levees; and removing spent transitional provisions.

The bill will amend both the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 and Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 to harmonise the coal and coal seam gas safety provisions that exist in both acts. These relate to 'joint interaction management plans' requirements, key terminology and inspector powers. They will ensure overlaps are addressed through risk management and the preparation of agreed joint plans before commencing overlapping operations to ensure effective regulation. The bill will also amend the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 to broaden the categories that determine eligibility for an individual to be appointed as the Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health under the act and under the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999.

033 These will focus on the mandatory qualifications required and expanding the range of potential eligible candidates. The bill will be supported with an amendment to the Water Regulation 2002, which will include processes to support the new streamlined Water Act framework. I intend to table the draft amendments to the Water Regulation 2002 that support these reforms in the House during the second reading debate on the bill.

The Newman government is committed to ensuring that accessibility, certainty and security for water users remains paramount in the proposed new framework for the responsible and productive use of water resources in Queensland. The bill delivers on this commitment and delivers a framework that strikes the appropriate balance between delivering economic, social and environmental outcomes.

I would like to acknowledge in the public gallery a number of officers from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines who have been instrumental in the development of this very important bill. I thank them publicly for their very hard work. I commend this bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.20 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 Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (4.20 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee report to the House on the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 17 November 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

~~**WATER LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL**~~