

~~That is not all in my portfolio. The Glass House SEC is going to move that the state council of the LNP support a policy where electricity charges are for usage only and should not apply to the supply or line component. In other words, let us not fund —~~

~~(Time expired)~~

~~MINISTERIAL STATEMENT~~

~~Further Answer to Question; Medicinal Cannabis~~



~~**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (11.31 am), by leave: Earlier in question time I indicated to the member for Dalrymple that there had been discussion at the ministerial council meeting on medicinal cannabis. Out of an abundance of clarity, I want to make sure that the member knows that there has been discussion at the ministerial office level. I have had informal discussions with ministers about it. It was not formally on the agenda at the ministerial council meeting. I did not want to mislead the member by saying that. It is on the COAG agenda. That is how it will be progressed. There is informal discussion amongst ministers to see how that can be progressed. I just wanted to clarify that for the member for Dalrymple.~~

ELECTORAL (IMPROVING REPRESENTATION) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.32 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Constitution of Queensland 2001 and the Electoral Act 1992 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill.

Tabled paper: Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill, explanatory notes.

The Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015 proposes to: change the number of electoral districts for the state by increasing the number of members of the Legislative Assembly from 89 to 93 to improve representation; improve the establishment of the Electoral Commission of Queensland by way of the bipartisan support of a parliamentary committee; and improve redistribution of electoral districts by the appointment of a non-judicial appointee with qualifications and experience in applied demography.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The private member's bill that is being presented by the member for Mount Isa appears to be substantially the same as the private member's bill that has been dealt with by the House this session. I seek your guidance on that.

Mr SPEAKER: I propose to let the member for Mount Isa continue with the first reading stage of the bill. I will then consider the proposal, as I am not aware of the bill, and then I will make a determination.

Mr KATTER: The bill importantly ensures that Queenslanders will have a more equitable and improved access to representation. It takes into consideration the dispersal of the population throughout the state and the number of members of the Legislative Assembly increasing in South-East Queensland. There is evidence that population density is continuing to increase in South-East Queensland and that certain areas in rural and remote Queensland are experiencing declining populations. I table a research paper relevant to the bill titled 'Population and electors'.

Tabled paper: Queensland Parliamentary Library Research Brief, dated 30 July 2015, regarding population and electors.

The two issues of density and distance, among other things, highlight the distinct difference between the challenges encountered by members providing representation in rural and regional electoral districts and those encountered by members providing representation in South-East Queensland. For example, my electoral district of Mount Isa covers 570,502 square kilometres, over 30 per cent of the entire state of Queensland. Ensuring equitable access to representation in expansive rural electoral districts as well as regional electoral districts in Queensland should not be undervalued. It is equally important as ensuring equitable access to representation for those residing in more densely populated South-East Queensland. Giving people the real ability to bring their grievances and concerns to the attention of a local member as well as providing people with a voice in the deliberations of the Legislative Assembly is vital to delivering good government in Queensland.

Unless this bill is passed, the next redistribution due in 2016 will most likely result in more rural and regional seats being lost to South-East Queensland. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a legitimate need to provide for representation in South-East Queensland due to the increasing population, we must also maintain and improve representation in rural and regional electoral districts. Rural and regional electoral districts really are where the engine room of Queensland's economy is situated. On this point, the bill is also about ensuring the Queensland parliament does not become South-East Queensland centric.

Major issues like the rural debt, the impacts of fly-in fly-out workforces on small towns and the need to improve essential services like health in remote locations must not be put at risk of going unnoticed by the Legislative Assembly. I encourage all members, especially those in South-East Queensland, to think seriously about their role in maintaining and improving representation across the state which is needed to ensure good government for all Queenslanders.

First Reading

Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.35 am): 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 Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date



Mr KATTER (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.37 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That under the provisions of standing order 136, the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill by 30 November 2015; and
2. That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended to ensure that all remaining stages of the Electoral (Improving Representation) and Another Act Amendment Bill be completed by 5 pm on 3 December 2015.



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.37 am): I rise to oppose this motion that would see this private member's bill reported back on in a very short time frame. I have already raised the concern that this bill may contravene standing orders given that it may be considered to be the reconsideration of a question that the House has already considered this session. I note the Speaker's ruling that he will consider that matter and report back to the House.

That aside, the time frame that we are talking about is significantly shorter than the time frame we think would be appropriate and acceptable to consider this bill. This is a matter that has been discussed and debated in some form, but the bill potentially has different complexities. If Mr Speaker allows this bill to be considered by the parliament, then it needs to be considered by the parliament through a proper and fulsome committee process that allows the opportunity for those people who were consulted the last time we looked at these issues to be consulted again. It should not be a shortened process that brings the bill back at the end of this month and does not allow the proper opportunity for engagement and consultation to occur. I do not believe that this shortened time frame is appropriate. I would ask that members of the House support me in making sure that our committees function properly and appropriately by having an appropriate time frame.

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Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—KAP) (11.39 am): I fully support the motion. It is about improving representation. It is different to the previous bill that has been put forward. Madam Deputy Speaker, obviously you are aware that we have a redistribution coming up and I believe that we have a time frame of February. You have to remember too that this is a desperate situation because we see a big disadvantage in rural and regional Queensland. In 1986 we had 17,500 constituents; now we are going to have 34,000. We are also going to see three to four seats abolished. We do not have the time frame. We have seen urgency motions pass this House for bills that were insignificant. This is a significant bill and it is important to the representation of Queensland.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Member for Dalrymple, sorry to interrupt you, but there is just too much audible conversation. I am struggling to hear the member for Dalrymple and I do want

to hear what he has to say. Would members please resume their seats if they are in passage ways against the standing orders? If you have conversations to have, member for Everton and member for Mount Ommaney, I suggest that you take them outside. The member for Dalrymple has the call.


Mr KNUTH: The people of Queensland have a big interest in this bill because they have been telling us that they want representation. That is what this bill is about. I fully support it and we need to get this through.

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (11.41 am): I just want to address the timing issue that has been presented by the member for Mount Isa in relation to reporting back on this private member's bill. From the outset, I do understand the motivation and the genesis for the desire for a speedy and prompt consideration of the private member's bill before the House. I do understand that there will be a redistribution process commencing early next year by the Electoral Commission of Queensland. But I think that we do this bill and the people of Queensland a disservice by not giving it appropriate attention, and that is pending Mr Speaker's ultimate analysis of whether or not this bill is substantially the same as another private member's bill that has already been dealt with by this House.

In relation to the Electoral Commission's determination around new boundaries, that process will commence early next year, but it will take some time for the ECQ to gather all the data that it needs, to gather the population predictions it needs and to start conveying to the people of Queensland draft boundaries which will probably be by the middle of next year. Given that there is that flexibility in the time frame, I think that there is scope for us to think about the parliamentary committee having a bit more time to consider this bill in these circumstances.

If we were to think about meeting the time frame of 30 November, as has been put by the member for Mount Isa, the Leader of the House has advised that we may need an additional parliamentary sitting in order to consider the report and the bill after the parliamentary committee reports back to the House. I think that we have the flexibility and the time to give the committee an additional amount of time in which to consider the bill before the ECQ commences its determination around the draft boundaries. As I said, those boundaries will not be out in February. The initial work commences in February. The boundaries will not be out until midway through 2016, so I do think we have time.

I want to convey to both the member for Mount Isa and the member for Dalrymple that I do have sympathy for their motivation in this respect. But I do want to absolutely convey that I think that there is time to give the parliamentary committee and this parliament and the people of Queensland a bit more time to consider fully a constitutional change. I do think that there is flexibility and capacity. This bill proposes a constitutional change and we should give such a significant change due consideration through a reasonable time frame.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.44 am), in reply: I first make the comment that these things are typically judged on substance over form, and we feel that the substance of this bill is significantly different or adequately different to that of the previous bill so that it can be reconsidered. As to the timing, I accept and acknowledge the arguments put forward by the Deputy Premier. But, on balance, obviously we feel that there is great impetus to have this resolved sooner rather than later.

It may be seen as an important interest in respect of Queensland to look after the timing, but we feel so far in this process that in rural and regional Queensland, particularly in those western areas, our interests have been forgotten. That gives impetus to having that time frame before that redistribution starts. That is where we see the importance. Obviously we have made it pretty clear to this parliament how important this is to us, which is why we feel so strongly about that time frame.

Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

AYES, 45:

LNP, 42—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, McVeigh, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Powell, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

INDEPENDENT, 1—Gordon.

NOES, 43:

ALP, 43—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Pyne, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

Resolved in the affirmative.


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~~SUSTAINABLE PORTS DEVELOPMENT BILL~~

~~Second Reading~~

~~Resumed from 11 November (see p. 2789), on motion of Dr Lynham~~

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

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh LNP) (11.52 am), continuing: ~~It is a pleasure to recommence my speech from last night. I was talking about the hypocrisy of the Labor Party for voting down the deferral motion moved by the member for Hinchinbrook. It was interesting last night that during his contribution on the motion the minister said it was very important that we continue with the debate to finalise the bill last night. In fact, he said~~

~~... I argue strongly that this bill should proceed today and not be deferred to a later date ...~~

~~Immediately after that the bill was deferred because the minister or somebody had something more important to do. One minute the reef is very important to the Labor Party and the next minute it is tossed in the long grass and we are back debating it again today.~~

~~As I said last night, this government is very hypocritical. It talks about how important the reef is. It has introduced this bill, which is basically a copy of the 2014 LNP bill with a couple of things deleted, but it stood in here a couple of days ago and talked about the massive expansion it wants to see happen at the Port of Townsville. You would tend to think, if all those stories are true, that expansion will do some sort damage to the reef, but the government does not seem to worry about that so we will just get on with it, apparently.~~

~~The committee found on its travels around Queensland that the port of Cairns is a real concern to the people of Cairns. They really want to see the port expanded up there and for it to be a priority port. That is why it flowed through to the recommendations made by the committee. Why do the people of Cairns want to see the Cairns port expanded? Because it is the lifeblood of Cairns. The people who spoke to our committee talked about the shipping activity that happens there.~~

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr HART: ~~I hear the member for Mulgrave interjecting under his breath. I want to go back to something that the member for Barron River said last night. In his contribution to the motion he said that the Cairns development project was very important to the Labor Party and had the full backing of the Labor Party. How surprising is that when we see that the member for Mulgrave, who is next door, removed the funding for that project. You would tend to think that, if the government really supported the Cairns development project, it would have kept the funding there instead of taking it out of the budget, but that is what the member for Mulgrave did. He took the money away. The member for Barron River should be aware that his government really does not support the Cairns redevelopment project, but the people of Cairns do. The people of Cairns want to see the port expanded. This notion that an allowance of 50,000 cubic metres per project is going to help or 150,000 cubic metres over four years is going to help is absolute nonsense.~~

~~I was interested to hear the member for Mirani talking about Port Alma. I think it would be really good for Port Alma to have an allowance of 50,000 per project for capital dredging or 150,000 over four years, because I think Port Alma could really benefit from it. It is really important that the minister answer the question posed by the member for Hinchinbrook. Why is it okay for the port of Cairns to have an extra allowance of 50,000 cubic metres or 150,000 over four years? Why is it not possible for every other port in Queensland that is very close to the World Heritage area to have exactly the same?~~

~~While I am on the subject of 50,000, it is important to put that into the context of what was going to happen with the Cairns Shipping Development Project. The Cairns Shipping Development Project is looking at widening the shipping channel into Cairns. Its proposal is to widen, deepen and lengthen the existing outer shipping channel. The current width of 90 metres is proposed to be widened to 130 metres. The declared depth would go from 8.3 metres to 9.4 metres. That requires 4.4 million in situ cubic metres of capital dredging. 150,000 is just not going to cut it. It is nowhere near enough to keep this port active.~~