


~~Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.~~

PLUMBING AND DRAINAGE BILL

Message from Governor

~~ Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport) (12.44 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.~~

~~Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): The message from His Excellency recommends the Plumbing and Drainage Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the Record of Proceedings. I table the message for the information of members.~~

MESSAGE

PLUMBING AND DRAINAGE BILL 2017

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

~~I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—~~

~~A Bill for an Act about plumbing and drainage, and the licensing of plumbers and drainers, and to amend this Act, the Planning Act 2016, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 and the Acts mentioned in schedule 2 for particular purposes~~

(sgd)

GOVERNOR

Date: 10 October 2017

~~Tabled paper: Message, dated 10 October 2017, from His Excellency the Governor recommending the Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2017.~~

Introduction

Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport) (12.45 pm): I present a bill for an act about plumbing and drainage, and the licensing of plumbers and drainers, and to amend this act, the Planning Act 2016, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 and the acts mentioned in schedule 2 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Public Works and Utilities Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2017.

Tabled paper: Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2017, explanatory notes.

I am indeed pleased to introduce the Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2017. This bill complements the Palaszczuk government's commitment to restore high standards in Queensland's plumbing industry. It will deliver a contemporary suite of laws that will meet industry and community expectations over the next decade and provide for the establishment of a mechanical services licence, including medical gas. This bill represents the third instalment of legislative reforms arising out of the Queensland Building Plan. Most of us only ever think about plumbing when something goes wrong. As a result, we tend to sometimes underestimate the critical role our plumbing laws play in protecting public health and safety and, of course, our environment.

Our community has safe water and sanitation services because of the dedication of our licensed plumbers and drainers who install and maintain these critical services. People expect the water that comes out of their kitchen tap and the plumbing in their bathroom and toilet to be safe and reliable—and so they should. As we move around our cities, going in and out of the buildings found in our urban areas, Queenslanders expect air-conditioning services simply to keep them comfortable and never to pose a threat to their safety. They have that expectation because of professional standards achieved by our air-conditioning industry.

Some of the most critical times of our lives are when loved ones are in hospital. Without knowing it, at that time we rely on the skills of professional gasfitters. These are the people who ensure things like lifesaving oxygen and anaesthesia are safely delivered to the surgical theatre and the recovery ward. This is something Queenslanders often take for granted. Our aim is to keep it that way.

The new Plumbing and Drainage Bill will deliver a streamlined and contemporary regulatory framework that reduces red tape. It will deliver savings of time and money for people building a home.

It will deliver a contemporary and consistent penalty framework for offences and it will deliver increased protections for consumers when purchasing and having plumbing products installed. The bill also amends the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 to establish a new mechanical services licence.

The Palaszczuk government, a consultative government, went to industry and asked them what they wanted—and we listened. We listened when industry told us the laws, regulations and codes that they were using were cumbersome and out of date. We listened when industry told us that the current plumbing laws were not keeping pace with innovation in building materials, technologies and methods. We listened to concerns about the WaterMark scheme allowing unlicensed plumbing work in completed bathrooms when they are craned into new buildings. Most importantly, we listened when the community told us that health and safety should not be compromised.

Turning to the key plumbing amendments, this bill promotes good governance, which—and this may come as a surprise to those opposite—is the cornerstone of a good government. Our plumbing reforms will promote savings in cost and time by reducing time frames for approving permits to commence certain plumbing work. Most home owners will be able to fast-track their applications and obtain a permit to start work in just two business days, reduced from the current 20 business days. The time frames for more complex projects, such as multi-unit residential and commercial buildings, will be halved from 20 business days down to 10 business days.

021 Faster approvals mean faster construction. If you can start sooner, you can finish the job sooner and move on to the next job. Queensland home owners could save an estimated \$640 in holding costs for a \$255,000 block, by being able to commence plumbing work 18 days earlier. However, Queenslanders can rest assured that there will be no reduction in standards. There are no changes to the inspection process and all permit work will continue to be inspected by local government.

Over the past 15 years, the act has been amended by 33 separate bills, causing the act to grow increasingly in size and complexity. Therefore, it is little wonder that industry supported taking a good hard look at the current laws. In response to that feedback, our plumbing laws have been completely rewritten. Standard terminology, timeframes and administrative processes have been adopted to improve readability and make the new plumbing laws easier to understand. The bill also provides greater deterrents for breaches of our important plumbing laws. There are increased penalties for unlicensed plumbing work and for offences that endanger health and safety.

The bill establishes a new licence for mechanical services and medical gas work. Mechanical services work includes the construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration, maintenance, testing or commissioning of a mechanical heating or cooling system in a building. It includes work associated with a medical gas system and incidental design work. The licence will regulate mechanical services work in large or public buildings used by the general public and community such as hospitals, shopping centres, office blocks and other commercial buildings, residential apartment blocks and entertainment complexes, including aquaria. The licence will not have an impact on ordinary home owners. It will not cover class 1a buildings meaning a single dwelling, for example, a detached house, townhouse or villa or class 10 buildings meaning a non-habitable building or structure, for example, a garage or shed. The licence has been designed to have no impact on our energy and resources industry and other industries such as manufacturing and processing.

The bill establishes exclusions from mechanical services work. This includes the installation of a single-head split system, gas work regulated under the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety Act) 2004 or the manufacture of pipe or ducting. Poorly performed mechanical services work has the potential to cause significant health and safety issues in the community. Members of this place are well aware of the danger posed by legionella in commercial air conditioning systems.

In addition to dealing with public health risks such as legionnaire's disease in air conditioning systems, the new mechanical services licence will address the serious risks posed by non-compliant medical gas installations. Members will recall the tragic incidents in 2016 at a New South Wales hospital, where one infant died and another tragically suffered permanent brain damage after being mistakenly administered nitrous oxide. It was later discovered that the medical gas system had been incorrectly installed. The loss suffered by those families is unimaginable and unfathomable.

The changes will introduce formal qualifications and licensing requirements for medical gas work in Queensland to ensure that this work is performed by individuals who are suitably qualified. The new mechanical services licence will be administered by the Queensland Building and Construction Commission as part of its ordinary business as Queensland's building industry regulator. There will be a period of transition before the new mechanical services licence commences. The transitional period

will allow people who are currently working unlicensed, including under the employment of a contractor licensee, to complete the necessary qualifications or demonstrate that they have the appropriate skills and experience to obtain a licence. This will allow industry time to prepare for the changes and to transition to a new class of licence with limited disruption.

I take this opportunity to table a draft of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (Mechanical Services Licence) Amendment Regulation 2017. The draft regulation sets out the detail of the licence, including the proposed classes of medical gas, air conditioning and refrigeration unlimited design, air conditioning and refrigeration limited design, and plumbing, as well as the scope of work for each class.

Tabled paper: Queensland Building and Construction Commission (Mechanical Services Licence) Amendment Regulation 2017—tabled draft—October 2017.

Amendments in the bill will also ensure the safety and integrity of plumbing products, including those certified under the national WaterMark Scheme, that are installed in our homes, our places of work and local shopping centres, for instance. The bill complements the government's non-conforming building product laws. It provides the ability for government to act swiftly to prohibit WaterMark products, whether it be a kitchen mixer tap or a prefabricated bathroom module, where they are considered to be defective, not fit for purpose or pose a public health risk.

The Palaszczuk government has engaged in true consultation with industry and the community, and I am particularly proud of that. From the boardroom to the local pub, we listened to feedback that has shaped the reform and refined the bill. I take this opportunity to commend and highlight the commitment and passion shown by so many members of the plumbing family.

In conclusion, the reforms in the bill are responsive to the needs of businesses, small and large. The bill will safeguard the health of our community and protect our environment. Finally, it provides a licensing regime to deliver the safest mechanical services installations in the country. I commend the bill to the House.

~~First Reading~~

~~Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport) (12.56 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 Public Works and Utilities Committee~~

~~Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Public Works and Utilities Committee.~~

~~LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL~~

~~Message from Governor~~



~~Hon. M FURNER (Ferny Grove ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (12.56 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.~~

~~Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): The message recommends the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.~~

~~MESSAGE~~

~~LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017~~

~~*Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68*~~

~~I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled~~

~~A Bill for an Act to amend the Local Government Act 2009 and the Public Service Act 2008 for particular purposes~~