

18 September 2014

Mr Steve Davies MP
Chair, Finance and Administration Committee and
Member for Capalaba
Parliament House
Corner of Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

RECEIVED
19 Sep 2014
Finance and
Administration Committee

Dear Mr Davies

Re: Inquiry into the *Queensland Plan Bill 2014*

I refer to your letter of 28 August 2014 inviting submissions on the *Queensland Plan Bill 2014* ("the Bill") which is currently being examined by the Finance and Administration Committee of the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

A review of the Bill and its provisions has been undertaken and on behalf of Council, I offer the following comments.

Obligations of local governments – clauses 11 and 14 of the Bill

Under clause 11 of the Bill, a local government is required to have regard to the Queensland Plan in the preparation of its corporate plan. Clause 14 also requires a local government's annual report to include a statement about any achievements against specific actions or goals in support of the Queensland Plan.

There is no particular objection to these requirements given their general intent, noting that local governments retain full discretion in formulating their corporate plans to determine arrangements which each council considers desirable and appropriate responses to the Queensland Plan.

Statutory responsibility of local governments – clause 7 of Schedule 1 of the Bill

Clause 7 of Schedule 1 of the Bill provides that the implementation of the Queensland Plan is the joint responsibility of the State, local governments, the community, business and industry. This joint responsibility includes the achievement of targets established by the Queensland Plan for its key areas.

As presently drafted, this clause leaves open the extent of the responsibility that is conferred on each of the parties - but does so in a legislative framework that is silent on the mechanisms for determining and apportioning these responsibilities. This not only leaves open to interpretation the extent of a local government's obligations and whether they have been fulfilled (as it also does for the other parties), but is also potentially inconsistent with the language in clause 3 of the Bill which seeks to encourage commitment by government, business, industry and the community to the aspirations articulated through the Queensland Plan.

I would suggest therefore, two alternative approaches for the Committee's consideration:

(a) Remove clause 7 of Schedule 1 as it is unnecessary, given:

- i. There are reporting obligations already established throughout the Bill which ensure a level of accountability of the State and local governments in respect of the implementation of the Queensland Plan; and
- ii. Clause 20 (b) of the Bill already provides for the Ambassadors Council to provide advice to the Premier on matters relating to the implementation of the Queensland Plan; or

(b) Amend clause 7 of Schedule 1 to put beyond doubt that it is the responsibility of each party to determine the application of their responsibility in the context of implementing the Queensland Plan.

Queensland Plan Ambassadors Council

I note the establishment of the Ambassadors Council as foreshadowed in clause 19 of the Bill to actively promote and advocate for the implementation of the Queensland Plan.

Clause 22 of the Bill provides that the membership of the Ambassadors Council will collectively represent the community, business or industry and regional Queensland. While this representation is very broad, it is considered that the Bill should establish an explicit requirement for representation from local government. As the Committee would be aware, local governments are well placed to provide a direct linkage to community views and aspirations as well as to provide advice on regional implementation issues and how to effectively and successfully promote the vision of the Queensland Plan at a regional level.

As the Bill also seeks to establish certain obligations on local governments in respect of the Queensland Plan, it is considered that clause 22 of the Bill should be amended to require that a representative of local government be included in the membership of the Ambassadors Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Queensland Plan Bill 2014*. Should the Committee require any clarification of any of the matters identified above, please do not hesitate to contact Council [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



JOHN KNAGGS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER