

Executive Summary

On 20 November 2025, the Honourable Andrew Powell MP, Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation (Minister), introduced the Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (Bill) into the Legislative Assembly. The Bill was referred to the Health, Environment and Innovation Committee (the committee) for detailed consideration.

The Bill is an omnibus bill which amends various acts within the Minister's portfolio and makes consequential amendments to resources legislation. The overarching objective of the Bill is to 'improve administrative efficiency and ensure the regulatory frameworks within Queensland's environmental legislation remain contemporary, effective and responsive'. It achieves this objective through sensible, measured reforms which provide for streamlining, reduced regulatory burden, improved clarity and additional enforcement powers.

Significant measures in the Bill include:

- amendments to the *Environmental Protection Act 1992* (EP Act) to introduce a new framework to clearly identify Queensland's significant environmental values (SEVs)
- reframing how environmentally relevant activities (ERAs) are identified and regulated under the EP Act
- introducing code-managed ERAs as an alternative to regulation by an environmental authority (EA) for lower risk activities
- amendments to the progressive rehabilitation closure plan (PRCP) framework to help EA holders transition into the framework, including removal of public interest evaluations (replaced with a requirement to assess public interest considerations), replacing mandatory 3-year rehabilitation audits with discretionary audits, and making clear that historical context should be considered when assessing PRCP applications for legacy sites
- removing duplicative public notice requirements for draft terms of reference for an environmental impact statement
- amendments to recognise impact assessment reports and related processes completed for coordinated projects as meeting the requirements for an environmental authority provided certain requirements are met
- increasing the time limits for commencing summary proceedings under the EP Act and *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* (WRR Act) to ensure complex offences may still be prosecuted
- amendments to the *Water Act 2000* (Water Act) to extend the underground water impact report (UWIR) reporting timeframe from 3 to 5 years
- other amendments to the Water Act to clarify certain matters, including requirements around baseline reporting, land access under make good agreements, and the power to issue bore assessments notices, with these

measures likely to improve transparency and coexistence between landholders and resource tenure holders

- the introduction of a single integrated permissions (SIP) for tourism activities, achieved through amendments to the *Forestry Act 1959* and *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006*; and
- clarifying amendments to the definition of protected area in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and providing conservation officers with powers to conduct investigations into related offences under the *Planning Act 2016*.

The committee received a written briefing from the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) on 3 December 2025, conducted two public briefings with DETSI on 10 December 2025 and 20 January 2026, and received further information from DETSI about the operation of the Bill in response to additional questions following each of these hearings. The committee received submissions from 36 stakeholders. DETSI provided the committee with a detailed written response to these submissions on 14 January 2026. Ten stakeholders gave evidence at a public hearing on 20 January 2026.

The committee carefully considered the key issues raised by the evidence presented. Overall, stakeholders supported the Bill's objective to reduce regulatory burden and measures aimed at streamlining the operation of various pieces of legislation. Several key concerns were raised, which are considered in detail in this report. A key theme arising from consideration of these submissions was the need to ensure that measures do not dilute environmental protection and public participation. The committee carefully considered these issues and concluded that the measures are proportionate and sensible and reduce regulatory burden while still providing appropriate safeguards for the environment in a way that takes into account the risks associated with various activities.

The committee assessed the Bill's compliance with fundamental legislative principles and concluded that the Bill has sufficient regard for the rights and liberties of individuals and the institution of Parliament. The committee also carefully considered the Bill's compatibility with human rights and concluded that any limits on property rights, cultural rights, and freedom of expression were proportionate and justified.

The committee made 1 recommendation, found at page ix of this report, that the Bill be passed.