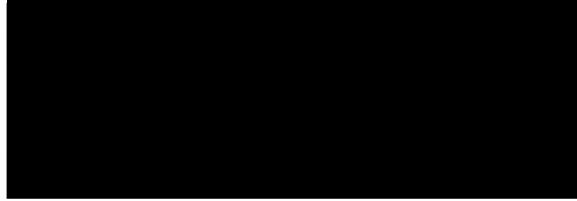


Sub No. 002
11.1.3
24 June 2015

Officer: Nick Cooney



22 June 2015

Research Director
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural
Resources Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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Dear Director

**Building Queensland Bill 2015
Submission from Sunshine Coast Council**

Sunshine Coast Council wishes to make a submission on the Building Queensland Bill 2015, as invited by your Committee. Please find Council's submission enclosed.

Council supports this initiative by the State Government and it is hoped that the points raised in Council's submission will assist in the development of an Act that contributes strongly to Queensland's prosperity.

Should there be any queries in connection with Council's submission, please contact Mr Nick Cooney, contact details provided above.

Yours faithfully



Ray Turner
A/Chief Executive Officer

Encl.

Building Queensland Bill 2015

1. Forecast Growth (Clause 10 (2) (a)) - When taking forecast growth into account, due recognition should be given to specifically allow for growth provided for in Regional Plans. The State Government requires local government to link infrastructure planning to Regional Plans, so it is important that the Bill recognises this relationship.
2. Preparation of Business Cases for Infrastructure Proposals (Clause 13) - The Bill is silent on how infrastructure projects valued at less than \$50 million will be dealt with. While it is acknowledged that the intended focus of Building Queensland will be on projects of value greater than \$50 million, individually and collectively, projects of this lesser value are of significant interest to local government. If such projects are to find their way into the proposed 'infrastructure pipeline' and the Bill indicates that the development of this infrastructure pipeline is the responsibility of Building Queensland, then it is clear that Building Queensland's role in this regard needs to be included in the legislation.

Further to the issue of projects of value less than \$50 million, the Explanatory Notes to the Bill state that if the State Government is asked to invest in a local government project, it may be a requirement to involve building Queensland as a condition of funding. These lower value projects are likely to fall in this range, again requiring wording in the Bill to address and clarify this Building Queensland involvement in lower value, but quite significant, projects.

3. Local Government Engagement with Building Queensland (Clauses 11 and 12) - The Bill provides no mechanism for local government to engage with Building Queensland in promoting or co-investing in State Government Projects. The 'infrastructure pipeline' informing the proposed Queensland Infrastructure Plan will most likely call on the great bulk of the State Government's infrastructure investment funds. Local government's ability to influence inclusion of projects for consideration needs to be provided for in the Bill. As an example, Sunshine Coast Council is continuing to develop a business case for provision of a Light Rail network on the Sunshine Coast. A recognised mechanism needs to be included in the legislation to provide an 'as of right' entry to Building Queensland.
4. Development of a Framework for Assessing Infrastructure Projects (Clause 11) - Because the development of this framework is so important to the effectiveness of Building Queensland meeting its 'charter', it would be beneficial to all parties for the draft framework to be distributed to interested parties, including local government, as an essential step in its development. This would provide some certainty that the 'pipeline' is accessible and that the framework will be equitable for the people of Queensland.
5. Split of Infrastructure Planning Role (Clauses 12, 13, 14 and 15) - Where Building Queensland takes a lead role in determining priority of infrastructure projects and populating the 'infrastructure pipeline' and the Queensland Infrastructure Plan, this could lead to a fracturing of the infrastructure planning role of State Government Departments. Following on from this, there is the potential difficulty for local governments to target or work with whole-of-network planning custodians, as has traditionally been the case. While the extent of this issue is difficult to define, it does merit consideration.

6. 'Infrastructure Pipeline' support (Clause 4) - The development of an Infrastructure Pipeline is supported as it will provide a level of certainty that a project will be delivered, having received prioritisation recognition and a place in the queue. This then requires that the framework for assessing costs and benefits of infrastructure projects needs to be rigorous, ensuring that only the most deserving of projects will attract promotion. It would appear, however, that projects costed at less than \$50 million will not be included in the 'pipeline'. There needs to be clarification on how the Queensland Infrastructure Plan will be populated with projects with values less than \$50 million and what role Building Queensland will have in this regard.
7. Independent Advisory Body (Clause 10) - The appointment of an independent expert adviser is supported, as this has the ability to de-politicise the development and delivery of the Queensland Infrastructure Plan, and with this, the ability or potential for projects to survive political cycles. Notwithstanding this, the reality that the Cabinet Budget Review Committee will have the final say is acknowledged. How will the final product development address the means of delivering the real benefits of what effectively could be a bi-partisan Queensland Infrastructure Plan?
8. Consultation by Building Queensland (Clause 20) - Consultation by Building Queensland is stipulated as optional, which is concerning to local government. Consultation on project selection, development, prioritisation and gaining a place in the infrastructure pipeline and/or in the Queensland Infrastructure Plan is vitally important to local government, a level of government that is well placed to provide informed commentary on infrastructure project proposals. Planning for parallel investment by local government would be optimised, to the benefit of both levels of government and the community at large.
9. Duplication of Effort (Clauses 10-20 inclusive) - There appears to be potential for duplication of effort by the traditional State agencies attending to whole of networks infrastructure planning, and Building Queensland stepping in, by direction or otherwise, and taking the lead agent role in major project infrastructure planning. It is hoped that Building Queensland involvement will not lead to unnecessary duplication of effort.
10. Equitable Investment (Clause 10, 11, 12 and 14) - While the creation of Building Queensland is supported, together with the potential for the Queensland Infrastructure Plan to be de-politicised, the ability of the assessment framework, as it is applied, to provide for equitable outcomes is paramount. Local government should be able to compare on an 'apples for apples' basis and that the projects and levels of investment applied are fair and equitable across the State, highly aspirational as this may be.