



OUR REF Strategic Planning – Infrastructure Planning -General
JR : JA

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11.1.3
29 June 2015

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Mr Jim Pearce MP
Chair Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resource Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane, QLD, 4000

Submission – Draft Building Queensland Bill

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resource Committee on the Draft Building Queensland Bill (the 'Bill').

It is noted that the Bill and the creation of Building Queensland (BQ) is linked to the State Government's election priorities and is referred also in the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning's *Delivering an Infrastructure Plan for Queensland – Directions Paper* (June 2015) (the 'Directions Paper'), which is currently out for public comment.

Although the content of this submission is targeted around the Bill, there may be elements of this submission that are also relevant to the Directions Paper. Mackay Regional Council also intends to make a submission on the Directions Paper.

Infrastructure definition

The Bill defines the term 'infrastructure' as follows:

means any infrastructure in which initial or further investment is likely to have a significant economic, environmental or social impact in the State or any region of the State

(Schedule 1 Dictionary, pp. 32).

Mackay Regional Council, like other local governments throughout Queensland manages and develops a range of infrastructure. Often there will be infrastructure projects Council undertakes that could be deemed to have a significant positive impact within this region based on the cost or the benefits. With the definition provided and the other aspects of the Bill, it is not clear how local government infrastructure projects may become part of the scope of BQ and its functions.

- a) ***It is suggested that greater clarity is provided about what is 'significant' infrastructure in the context of the Bill and what BQ's role and functions are outside of State Government led projects, specifically local government.***

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Mackay is regarded as the regional services hub of the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday region, the Bowen Basin and is one of the most recognised and innovative sugar cane growing and milling areas in Australia. There are a number identified key infrastructure projects, both planned and aspirational, that would benefit from coordinated and proactive regional planning.

Infrastructure investment by all levels of government will be a key to ensuring economic growth for the Mackay Region into the future. Working in collaboration with key regional and strategic development organisations will yield far stronger regional development outcomes, particularly around regional strategic planning, investment and funding attraction.

The Bill and specifically BQ will potentially have an influence on future investment across the region for significant projects, specifically in relation to:

- The prioritisation of significant projects cross the State and across infrastructure program areas;
- How project benefits and costs are assessed;
- How projects are evaluated;
- The development of the project pipeline; and
- How resources are procured for the delivery of projects.

It is recognised that BQ's key role will be to provide advice to State Government based around the points in Section 10 of the Bill. It is also noted that this advice must be based on rigorous analysis. Mackay Regional Council is particularly interested in understanding how BQ will undertake this rigorous analysis taking into account growth, sustainability factors, cost benefit analysis and the community benefits. Understandably this level of detail is not yet available. However, this type of detail will be of interest to all stakeholders in the future, particularly where other infrastructure networks may be impacted. It will be important for BQ to consult with local governments as required.

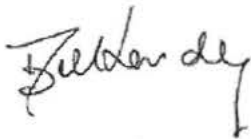
With the proposed role and function of BQ, it is likely that there will be a number of benefits from the work that BQ delivers that could be utilised by other infrastructure providers outside of the State Government, particularly local government. For example, section 11 of the Bill specifically requires BQ to *develop a framework for assessing the costs and benefits of infrastructure projects*. This type of framework could potentially assist local government in undertaking similar cost-benefit assessments and project evaluation for larger or more complex projects. Other functions of BQ that may provide assistance and improve outcomes for the community include broader project evaluation and procurement processes.

Another consideration will be ensuring transparency for the wide range of stakeholders, including in the consulting and development industries that will have an interest and keen involvement in the broader infrastructure pipeline. The Bill deals with this matter in section 16(2), which states that BQ *may publish any information relevant to its functions, other than confidential information*. This section could be further expanded to improve the opportunities for broader information sharing and learning external to State Government and maximise the transparency of BQ.

- b) To ensure transparency and maximise the potential of other infrastructure providers to get benefit from the work of BQ, it is recommended that the Bill be expanded to include greater requirement of BQ to consult with stakeholders (external to State Government) and publish any relevant guidelines and documents developed by BQ.***

We trust that the above information is useful and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss any of the issues raised in our submission. Please contact Jaco Ackerman [REDACTED] if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David McKendry".

David McKendry
A/ Chief Executive Officer