



# **STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS COMMITTEE**

Mr JJ McDonald MP—Chair  
Ms JM Bush MP  
Mr TA James MP (via videoconference)  
Mr D Kempton MP (via videoconference)  
Mr SR King MP  
Mr BJ Mellish MP

**Staff present:**

Ms S Galbraith—Committee Secretary  
Ms R Duncan—Assistant Committee Secretary

## **PUBLIC BRIEFING—INQUIRY INTO THE PLANNING (SOCIAL IMPACT AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2025**

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Monday, 12 May 2025**

**Brisbane**

**MONDAY, 12 MAY 2025**

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**The committee met at 2.01 pm.**

**CHAIR:** Good afternoon. I declare open this public briefing for the inquiry into the Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. I am Jim McDonald, member for Lockyer and chair of the committee. With me here today are: Ms Jonty Bush, member for Cooper and deputy chair; Mr Terry James, member for Mulgrave, via videoconference; Mr David Kempton, member for Cook, via videoconference; Mr Shane King, member for Kurwongbah; and Mr Bart Mellish, member for Aspley.

The purpose of today's briefing is to assist the committee with its examination of the Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. This briefing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the parliament's standing rules and orders. Only the committee members and invited witnesses may participate in the proceedings. Witnesses are not required to give evidence under oath or affirmation, but intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. Members of the public may be excluded from the briefing at the discretion of the committee. I remind committee members that officers are here to provide factual or technical information. Questions seeking an opinion about policy should be directed to the minister or left to debate on the floor of the House.

The proceedings are being recorded and broadcast live on the parliament's website. Media may be present and are subject to the committee's media rules and the chair's direction at all times. You may be filmed or photographed during the proceedings and images may also appear on the parliament's website or social media pages. Please turn your mobiles phones off or to silent mode. Finally, I remind everyone to please remember to press your microphones on before you start speaking and off when you are finished.

**BUCKLEY, Ms Eugenie, Deputy Director-General, Olympic and Paralympic Games Office, Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games**

**FERRIS, Mr Shaun, Acting Deputy Director-General, Strategic Insights and Advisory, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning**

**HARWOOD, Ms Peta, Deputy Director-General, Planning, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning**

**KELLY, Ms Leah, Deputy Director-General, Infrastructure and Regional Strategy, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning**

**CHAIR:** I welcome witnesses from the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and the Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games. I invite you to brief the committee, after which committee members will have some questions for you.

**Ms Kelly:** Good afternoon, chair and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity today to provide this briefing on the Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. As outlined by the chair, we have officers from across the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and the Department of Sport, Racing and Olympic and Paralympic Games to answer questions regarding their relevant amendments to the bill. In this opening statement, we will cover the objectives of the bill, its key elements, how it will be applied and consultation so far. The bill amends multiple pieces of legislation with different objectives, so I will hand to my colleague Peta Harwood, State Planner, to talk about Planning Act amendments and then I will cover EDQ and the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act.

**Ms Harwood:** This bill delivers on an election commitment to amend laws for impact assessment for renewable energy projects to bring into account approval processes consistent with other industries like mining. In February 2025, wind farms were made impact assessable by the State

Assessment and Referral Agency, and this is the next stage of that election commitment which extends to large-scale solar farms and introduces a social impact and community benefit framework into the Planning Act.

The bill amends the Planning Act to introduce a community benefit system, initially proposed, as I said, for those two types of land uses. The Planning Act will be comprised of two new core components: the social impact assessment and a community benefit agreement. Introducing a community benefit system into the Queensland Planning framework is twofold: the social impact assessment process will ensure robust assessment of social impacts, including consideration of community views prior to development assessment regulatory processes; and community benefit agreements will enable the social impacts of developments to be avoided, minimised, managed or counterbalanced and will provide certainty that enduring community benefit will be delivered for host communities, providing a positive legacy.

Proponents will be required to undertake an assessment of the project's social impacts and enter into a community benefit agreement with the local government, at a minimum, prior to lodging a formal development application. The community benefit agreement is to contain measures and commitments to manage and counterbalance social impacts as well as enhance community outcomes for a positive legacy. Both the social impact assessment report and the community benefit agreement will form material to be submitted as part of a properly made development application.

The bill seeks to establish the community benefit system in the Planning Act to prescribe the uses that are required to apply to the community benefit system in the planning regulation; specifically, that will be wind farms and large-scale solar farms. This approach will allow the ability to apply the community benefit system to emerging future land uses where those uses will have social impacts on communities as well.

Transitional provisions are also included in the bill, with amendments to clarify how the Planning Act and subsequent planning regulation amendments will apply to a development application that has been made or lodged but not decided. The amendments provide for a mediation process to support the community benefit system process and negotiations. The chief executive, on request, may refer the parties to mediation to seek to reach an agreement. There is provision in the bill for local governments to be able to charge a fee for that process.

As I said, the amendments are aligned to government election commitments. More importantly, they will provide a system which will be consistent and transparent to ensure that development with social impacts will be effectively managed and that a binding commitment to deliver positive, enduring benefit to host communities is made. The bill has been released with a variety of other supporting documents to explain how it will be operationalised as well.

**Ms Kelly:** The bill also amends the Economic Development Act 2012 to enhance administrative efficiency and flexibility, enabling Economic Development Queensland to drive meaningful progress and effectively advance government objectives. The bill amends the ED Act to clarify the procedure for appointing and removing the chief executive, an acting chief executive and board members. The amendments also permit the capacity to delegate government board member attendance at board meetings. Allowing proxy members to attend board meetings to meet quorum requirements will ensure that meetings can proceed even if there are calendar conflicts amongst members that may arise. These amendments support the Queensland government's commitment to refocus Economic Development Queensland on delivering homes in priority development areas to increase housing supply.

The bill also amends the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Arrangements Act 2021. The amendments follow the 100-day review undertaken by the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority, and the subsequent release of the 2032 games delivery plan. The 100-day review was informed by over 5,800 submissions which assisted in the identification of the venues, villages and games related transport infrastructure and other matters covered in the 2032 Delivery Plan. The bill makes important amendments to the act that relate to the governance, project delivery and planning pathways. The amendments contained in the bill are necessary to enable the implementation of the 2032 games delivery plan in time for the games, with appropriate governance, oversight and process efficiency.

The independent 100-day review recommended establishing whole-of-games governance, including through mobilising the games leadership group. The bill makes clear that the games leadership group will provide strategic direction in relation to the delivery of the games in compliance with obligations and commitments made by the government. It will facilitate collaborative decision-

making by, and provide oversight and advice to, games entities. The bill recognises the games leadership group as the senior most decision-making group that can resolve important cross-partner issues and provide direction and advice to GIICA and the organising committee.

The independent review of the games also recommended that strategic governance groups be streamlined to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of decision-making, including through a reduction of the Brisbane 2032 organising committee, referred to as the corporation, board membership. In response to that, the bill reduces the total number of directors on the corporation's board from 24 to 15 by: reducing the maximum number of independent directors from five to three; reducing Queensland government nominations from four to one; reducing Australian government nominations from four to one; and reducing Australian Olympic Committee representatives from three to two.

In addition to a reduction in the total number of directors on the corporation's board, the proposed amendments seek to further enhance efficiency and effectiveness by: reducing the number of vice-presidents from six to one, being the director nominated by the responsible Queensland minister; ensuring three key local government areas involved in the games—Brisbane City Council, City of Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast Council—can each nominate one director to the corporation's board; and streamlining the appointment process by removing certain requirements for the appointment of directors.

In relation to the GIICA's role and function, the amendments clarify the role of GIICA going forward to be focused on the oversight and delivery of venues in accordance with the games delivery plan. GIICA will be responsible for the delivery of authority venues, and the games delivery plan identifies that other entities, such as City of Gold Coast, are responsible for the delivery of other venues.

The bill provides that GIICA must lead the design and construction of the authority venues, including obtaining funding. To ensure appropriate visibility of process in delivering authority venues, the bill introduces new provisions that allow the chief executive of the department to ask GIICA for information, to inspect venues, to attend meetings and to assess progress made in delivering one or more authority venues. The bill also removes provisions that relate to the 100-day review, as that is now complete. In relation to the GIICA board composition, amendments remove limitations on the composition of the board. It also amends provisions relating to the appointment of the CEO to be made by the minister after consultation with the board.

The amendments include changes to the powers and responsibilities of GIICA also, including: removal of the requirements to prepare the Transport and Mobility Strategy and the Games Coordination Plan; removal of the land acquisition powers currently afforded to GIICA under the existing act; the identification of endorsed venues, villages and games related transport infrastructure in accordance with the games delivery plan; and streamlining the planning approvals process for the development of, or relating to, venues or villages and games related transport infrastructure identified in the act. The bill provides that any development for authority venues, other venues or villages listed in the bill are lawful and not subject to compliance or approval under the Planning Act or other stated legislation, and they are not subject to statutory appeals or judicial review or other legal proceedings that may delay the delivery of venues, villages and games related transport infrastructure in time for the games.

All venues and villages will be required to comply with necessary building and safety requirements. A modified process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage matters is set out. It incorporates engagement and consultation with relevant parties and preparation of a cultural heritage management plan in the event that parties cannot be identified or agreement cannot be reached within the identified timeframes. It includes a framework to enable a contribution to be recovered towards infrastructure costs for the development of the villages. Other existing infrastructure charging frameworks under other acts will not apply.

In relation to the streamlined planning provisions, while the bill makes the development of authority venues, other venues and games related transport infrastructure lawful, the proposals and projects will be required to undertake appropriate design, technical analysis and other investigations that would ordinarily be required for state delivered infrastructure projects. This includes engagement with community and local governments. The amendments relating to the act are needed to ensure that GIICA's role is clear and focused on the authority venues and that necessary games infrastructure can be delivered efficiently and in time for the games. This concludes the opening statement. We are happy to take any questions from you.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. I will go to the deputy chair.

**Ms BUSH:** Thanks for coming along and welcome back. Peta, I think last time you were in front of us we were just celebrating you as the State Planner; congratulations on your elevation. I might pick up on the comment you made around consistency, because my first impression of this bill is that it requires a different obligation and different threshold from renewable energy projects as opposed to mining coal, gas and oil—that is, there are some different thresholds or eligibility criteria for renewable energy projects in this bill. Can you tell us about that?

**Ms Harwood:** The threshold applies to all wind farms as proposed. As proposed in the regulation, it applies to large-scale solar farms. There is a definition of ‘large-scale solar farms’ I can go into in the regulation.

**Ms BUSH:** No, that is okay. What I am getting at is that there are requirements through this bill for solar and wind farms to have to seek local government agreements and there are social impact tests and community benefit tests. Those are tests that do not apply currently to mining companies; is that correct?

**Ms Harwood:** They apply for their authorities through different legislation but they do go through a very similar process. In fact, the social impact guideline that we are adopting under the Planning Act is the social impact guideline that is used by the Coordinator-General for state coordinated projects, which is a similar process to what resource authorities go through.

**Ms BUSH:** Did the department then consider those current existing approval processes such as the ones through the Coordinator-General that are already in place? Why this new process? Why is a bill required rather than looking at the established process particularly, using your words, around consistency?

**Ms Harwood:** The bill does provide for proponents to still go through the Coordinator-General process, for example. That is provided for under proposed section 106ZK, division 7 in the bill. Effectively, when a project goes through a Coordinator-General process anyway, it still has to primarily often get a Planning Act approval as well. Wind farms were already impact assessable under the Planning Act by SARA so we have decided to keep everything under the Planning Act for that consistency. Solar farms are currently assessed under the Planning Act by individual local governments so, again, it is keeping it consistent with the current framework, just adding some additional requirements for these types of developments.

**Ms BUSH:** Will mining companies have to seek, for example, local government approval now to proceed?

**Ms Harwood:** Mining companies are not covered by this change. They will continue under their existing processes. My understanding is that they do under their current processes, yes, which is a different act.

**Ms BUSH:** So they do currently, under a different act; thank you.

**Mr JAMES:** Peta, we are going from code assessment to impact assessment. Once the bill goes through, do the local government authorities then have to go through the process of updating their planning schemes and will that hold things up?

**Ms Harwood:** No. Effectively through the bill and then through the prescription of the type of land uses, which is wind farms and large-scale solar farms in the regulation, automatically then those assessments come to SARA as the assessment manager and apply whatever is in the State Development Assessment Provisions. We have released a draft solar farm code that would be proposed to be included in the State Development Assessment Provisions that SARA would use to assess these applications once the bill is introduced, if the bill is introduced. No, they will not need to amend their planning schemes at all.

**Mr MELLISH:** Ms Harwood, why does the bill make the right to lodge a development application conditional on completing new requirements when other developments would be assessed once they are lodged? What is the prelodgment phase about?

**Ms Harwood:** The prelodgment phase is to make sure that these large-scale projects are engaging with communities early and looking at what their social impacts are beyond their site. Because the sites are so large for these types of developments, they have an impact on host communities quite distant from the site, which is different to how normal developments are assessed under the Planning Act. This introduces a social impact process to be followed, which should inform a community benefit agreement for an agreement to be in place with the local government prior to lodgement. As I said, there are processes provided for in the bill for mediation should those negotiations stall. There is provision for local government to charge a fee to be able to engage in the process so that they can engage quickly in the process. Ultimately, there is also a reserve power for

the chief executive to rule that a social impact assessment or community benefit framework agreement is not required. Also, if there are already similar agreements in place or underway, they may be accepted through that process.

**Mr MELLISH:** What are the criteria around that reserve power to allow it to proceed without having the social impact assessment?

**Ms Harwood:** Ultimately, the chief executive has the discretion to consider what he needs to there, but, effectively, it might be that there are minor impacts and he considers that it is not required. As I said, there might already be an agreement in place previously that does the job. Ultimately, because there is a mediation that may have been undertaken as well, while the mediation is confidential there would be a mediation certificate given to the chief executive so he would have some visibility as to participation in the process. There may be also potentially multiple local governments affected so he may make a decision that only one is required for one local government, for instance. We wanted to allow for multiple circumstances for that to be considered.

**Mr KEMPTON:** With greater reliance on renewable energy, obviously coming from large-scale solar farms and wind farms, I am assuming that becoming impact assessable may result in fewer wind farm and large solar farm projects going ahead. Was there any assessment of the impact on renewable energy available to the grid?

**Ms Harwood:** It is not my department's responsibility to look at our energy plan. That is being looked at by the departments of Treasury in Energy, for that particular aspect. We do note that many proponents are already following this model with a social impact assessment community benefit before they lodge their applications. We do not intend to see a large drop-off in the number of serious contenders in this industry.

**Mr KEMPTON:** I guess you have already answered this: would there be a greater timeframe involved in getting through the impact assessment process than there would through the code assessable process?

**Ms Harwood:** The development assessment rules do set out timeframes for each stage in the decision, so it is bound by those DA rules so it does not go on forever. There are distinct timeframes for each stage. Ultimately, there is a public notification period that does extend an impact assessable application, so that would make it longer than a code assessable application, yes.

**Mr KING:** The member for Cook asked some good questions and I would like to follow up on some of them. Does the department expect the additional requirements on renewable energy projects to result in delays, as the member said, and higher up-front costs for developers? Could there be delays in the costing?

**Ms Harwood:** We do expect that it will take longer from start to finish, but it is a process that we understand many proponents have been following anyway. There are, ultimately, a number of these agreements already being negotiated with communities. The bill provides a framework for that and gives the community certainty that those frameworks will be in place and adhered to through compliance and things like that. Previously, they would be handshake agreements and those kinds of things.

Yes, it is really making sure that these processes are consistent for all proponents across Queensland and applying to large-scale solar farms as well. Solar farms were not assessed consistently across the state. They have been assessed by local governments against their planning scheme, so in some local government areas they are code and in some they are impact. This makes it consistent across the state. It makes it a level playing field. Was there a second part to your question?

**Mr KING:** Has there been any assessment of the up-front costs for developers, with the longer periods?

**Ms Harwood:** It should not actually cost them more. It is more that we are asking them to consider things earlier in the process—where they are going to accommodate their workforce, where they are going to be bringing their construction materials from, how long they are going to be there for construction and those types of things—which, really, communities are entitled to know in terms of how it is going to impact them and impact their ability to access services in their own communities and understand what the impacts are. There will be a little bit more up-front consideration by proponents when they are planning their projects, I would say. Ultimately, a lot of the lifecycle impacts are things that they would need to consider in setting up their project anyway and the timing of those things.

**Mr KING:** Because of those increased timeframes, we would be reliant on fossil fuels for longer. Has there been any assessment of how that would increase emissions given the extended time periods?

**Ms Harwood:** No. As I said, that is not my responsibility in the planning department.

**Mr KING:** On the same theme, how do these reforms align with Queensland's and Australia's renewable energy and emissions targets? Was any advice sought from the energy department on that?

**Ms Harwood:** Yes, they were consulted.

**CHAIR:** After nearly three years of delays since the Brisbane Olympics was named as the host city and, from what I can see, the risk of delays of delivery being real, how will the delivery planning and approval powers within this bill improve the state's ability to deliver the Brisbane 2032 games on time?

**Ms Kelly:** The 100-day review assessed and the games delivery plan set out the intricate network of critical infrastructure required to deliver a successful games. It is about ensuring those projects along with legacy objectives and also a complex range of games requirements. The games delivery plan covers well over 40 projects to be delivered in time for the games and clearly sets out venues, villages and games related transport infrastructure, all of which need to work in a coordinated and comprehensive master plan to deliver a successful games.

Given that all of those projects need to be connected and considered in a streamlined and focused way, these amendments look to ensure there is a streamlined and consistent approval pathway for all of the games infrastructure that is required within the defined timeframe for delivery in advance of the games. The bill sets out that planning pathway and the streamlined process that does assist with ensuring that venues, villages and games related transport infrastructure across that network across the state are delivered in an efficient and streamlined way.

Without that clarity of a project delivery pathway, which the games delivery plan does provide, and the streamlined process, there is a risk of overlap or inconsistencies and impacts across projects. It does look to ensure that the approvals process is streamlined; it ensures that the development of venues, villages and transported related infrastructure can be delivered in time for the games and that those legacy benefits can be achieved; and it ensures that delays due to third-party activities and actions or reviews do not delay delivery beyond those requirements. There is a very significant number, quantity and geographic spread of generational infrastructure that will benefit Queensland long after the games are required to be delivered, but it does need to be delivered now in a very defined timeframe and to a set of requirements, which this bill facilitates with delivering.

**Ms BUSH:** I want to come back to the questions asked by the member for Kurwongbah. Peta, you mentioned that increased emissions and ongoing timeframes were not your area but were with the department of energy. I think then you mentioned that you did get a briefing from them around how that would align with our renewable energy targets and emissions reduction targets. I did not hear you say whether they did align. Essentially, how does this bill align with us meeting our emissions reduction targets and our renewable energy targets?

**Ms Harwood:** I will clarify that the department of Energy in Treasury is responsible for our energy plan for Queensland and ensuring we meet our targets. That is their policy. They were consulted in our state agency working group multiple times through the development of this bill so they are very aware of it. Ultimately, this bill does not prevent these developments from going ahead. It really just intends that the social impacts are well managed and that community benefits for host communities are in place when these developments go ahead. It is not preventing the development in any way.

**CHAIR:** Deputy Chair, those matters are not the subject of this bill. The department is being very open about answering the questions about consultation.

**Ms BUSH:** I do not think we are having an argument about it.

**CHAIR:** The issues of energy around that are questions for somebody else.

**Ms BUSH:** Respectfully, the bill is about putting in place additional obligations on renewable plans and projects, so that does directly link to emissions reduction and to renewables. I hear what you are saying, Peta, around advice given. Certainly a lot of people throughout Queensland are concerned about our ability to meet those targets. Can we be assured that this bill will not slow that down?

**CHAIR:** Deputy Chair, that is a question for others, not for these officers. That is a question for others. The State Planner—

**Ms BUSH:** I think you received a briefing from Treasury and Energy. Can you talk about the briefing?

**Ms Harwood:** I think you can look at it another way. Solar farms at the moment are assessed by different local governments across Queensland and against 77 different planning schemes so they have no surety of getting through all those different local governments either in an expedient way, even if they are code, because they do not necessarily have the resources. The other way to look at this is that we are being very open and transparent with the renewable energy community about what is expected so that they have a very clear process to follow. The government is actually investing in things like mediation processes and giving clear guidelines about what is required so that they can expediently move through the process many are following. I do not think it is there to prohibit these developments; it is just to have a level playing field, effectively, and consistency.

**Ms BUSH:** No barriers or red flags have been raised with you by Treasury in relation to this bill?

**Ms Harwood:** No, they have been aware of the bill since the very beginning and have been working with us at our state agency working group. We have also had a number of peak bodies say that they find the bill to be very workable and that is what is expected in other jurisdictions as well.

**Mr JAMES:** It probably speeds up the process if the local governments have the surety now and they are generally all singing from the same hymn sheet. You also get that community benefit, which was not guaranteed before. Having said that, how can the community have input into the community benefit agreement and is it being managed by the council?

**Ms Harwood:** The social impact guideline actually defines how community engagement is to occur. That is the very first step in this process. A proponent would need to do a profile of the impact of communities and whether that is close by or distant from the site, depending on how they are going to operate, how they are going to construct and where their workforce is coming from. Then they need to do a detailed stakeholder engagement plan. They need to seek stakeholder feedback, consider all of the issues raised and submit that to the local government as part of their social impact assessment, which then forms part of that community benefit agreement. Communities can be assured that they have to be consulted in that social impact process and also through the community benefit agreement. We are setting as a minimum that a community benefit agreement has to be agreed with the local government. There can also be further community benefit agreements with other public bodies including state agencies, so it is not limited.

**Mr JAMES:** Having said that, do you have any examples of what would form part of a community benefit agreement?

**Ms Harwood:** The guideline that has been released lists things like local procurement from businesses and where workforce is going to be accommodated. It could also be financial contributions to community services. There was a fact sheet released with the bill that identifies the different types of examples.

**Mr JAMES:** Local procurement is a good one; otherwise, everything could come from Brisbane. Now you are supporting those local communities.

**Ms Harwood:** The social impact assessment guideline process they have to follow does step them through each of those aspects. That is why I am saying they need to consider these aspects anyway when they are ultimately setting up their development to commence. It is just asking them to think about those things I mentioned earlier—where workforce is going to come from, where their housing and accommodation is going to come from as well as their local business and industry procurement, and health and community wellbeing. They are the elements of a social impact assessment that forms that community benefit agreement.

While we give examples of what can be in a community benefit agreement, we are leaving that quite flexible. It ultimately could come down to a financial payment available to the local government held in trust to spend in that community or it could be more detailed depending on what the social impact is guiding.

**Mr JAMES:** It could also be something like a guarantee of the minimum percentage of local contractors of that small community who have to be engaged.



**Ms Harwood:** Yes, and in other cases there are discounts offered for access to renewable energy. In other cases we have seen co-ownership offered to communities as well. There is a whole range of benefits, potentially.

**Mr JAMES:** That is fantastic. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** I have been talking to the LGAQ. About 19 motions have gone through their state conferences regarding these matters. We look forward to seeing their submission, which might inform some of the areas you are discussing.

**Mr MELLISH:** I have a couple of questions about the Olympics and Paralympics. Can the department confirm that the powers in the bill were not part of the 100-day review or consultation on the 2032 delivery plan? Were stakeholders consulted on these legislative changes being proposed as part of the 100-day review process?

**Ms Kelly:** The 100-day review prepared by the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority did have a recommendation relating to consideration of special legislation in order to streamline and assist with ensuring the infrastructure could be delivered in time for the games. The games are the root plan; then put forward is the plan of infrastructure required across those categories. This bill sets out the streamlined approval pathway to ensure that network of venues, villages and games related transport infrastructure can be delivered in time for the games by GIICA, state agencies and also other delivery entities such as the City of Gold Coast.

**Mr MELLISH:** They were not consulted specifically on streamlined legislative processes?

**Ms Kelly:** In preparing the bill in relation to governance changes, Brisbane 2032 was consulted, and we talked to GIICA ahead of the introduction of the bill, but the state considered what were the specific games requirements for infrastructure that do not apply to infrastructure delivered for non-games purposes as well as the legacy requirements that ensure efficient delivery and that GIICA can get on expeditiously with delivery of the venues. There is a lot for them to deliver, and there is a lot for state agencies to deliver that can be delivered as efficiently as possible with these amendments to support that process.

**Mr KEMPTON:** I go back to the solar farms and wind farms. I note there is a social impact assessment as part of being impact assessable. In my part of the world there was a lot of controversy in particular around wind farms being developed in areas of high environmental value on the Great Dividing Range. Somebody was talking about creating zones where wind farms could be created without necessarily having a high environmental impact. Does social impact assessment go as far as to look at the environment, or do you rely upon other things such as the EPBC and the other state legislation?

**Ms Harwood:** In February of this year wind farms were made impact assessable by the State Assessment and Referral Agency. At that time we introduced further changes to the wind farm code. For many years the department, as the assessment manager, has been assessing wind farms as code assessable and there have been some provisions in that code where we consider environmental impacts. The planning bill at the moment is already fit for purpose for assessing environmental impacts and it has been doing that for some time. As I said, in February that was strengthened to make wind farms impact assessable and there were further additions made to the wind farm code at that time. This bill is introducing social impact because that is a new concept that has not been introduced in the bill before.

**Mr KEMPTON:** It has been a while since I practised in the area, so thank you for that.

**Mr KING:** My question is around the commentary, and I will not go into any submissions or anything like that because we still have submissions coming in. There seems to be a bit of a flavour around the commentary. I am wondering what safeguards are in place to protect the environment and cultural heritage and to ensure the community still has a say when Olympics projects are exempt from normal assessment and consultation processes?

**Ms Kelly:** The bill introduces amendments for, as I stated in the opening, authority venues, other venues or games related transport infrastructure or villages listed, to be lawful and not subject to approval under the Planning Act or the other stated relevant acts. Venues and villages are required to comply with necessary building and safety requirements. The Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority and other proponents developing projects will still be required to undertake detailed planning, technical analysis, environmental analysis, costing and other processes required. GIICA will then submit that to the Queensland government for assessment, which then will be subject to approval and funding. For GIICA to carry out the amendments, that does not preclude the need for detailed planning and assessment and considerations to be undertaken or community engagement

to be undertaken, from planning through delivery ahead of the games. It just provides that streamlined pathway so that there are not ways that projects can be unduly delayed and to put at risk their delivery in time for the games.

The bill also modifies a process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage matters. It sets out a process clearly in the act which requires notification, engagement, consultation and the opportunity to reach agreement with relevant parties. If that is not achieved within a stated timeframe then the cultural heritage management plan in the act will apply to enable development to continue efficiently.

**Mr KING:** Will local residents and community groups have the ability to appeal or litigate those approvals on environmental or cultural heritage grounds?

**Ms Kelly:** The bill, as I mentioned, sets out that the developments are lawful and not subject to those approval processes under the acts listed. When those venues, villages or transport related infrastructure projects are included in the schedules to the act, that will apply. As I said, though, there are a range of other acts which will still apply. As the usual planning process's appeal and judicial review mechanisms are not available under those acts, they are lawful; they will be developed in accordance with the approvals given to them and any conditions set out within them.

**Mr KING:** The results are publicly accessible so people can see what decisions were made?

**Ms Kelly:** The development of the technical work, costing work and other analysis undertaken by GIICA will be subject to government consideration and cabinet consideration. GIICA, as mentioned, will, during development, consult with the community and ensure that as they are working through the delivery of those venues they are undertaking consultation and community is aware of what is happening in community and any potential impacts, as is usual with construction projects. The plans for where things will be developed will be worked through with relevant community entities and others as they are developed. The work that is done and submitted will be subject to government consideration and their view on any release of material.

**CHAIR:** Over the previous three years the Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority was established to progress Olympic Games preparations and I understand no venues began construction. Were any early works commenced or were any approvals sought for project delivery?

**Ms Kelly:** The Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority, as it was formerly known, had undertaken project validation reports and commenced procurement on some of the minor venues projects. There had been some investment decisions received but construction had not yet commenced nor planning approvals received. Some procurement activities were underway on initial projects that were in the market at the time. There had been a range of cost escalations and results coming back from that initial procurement which demonstrated they were not going to meet the approved budgets. Then there was a change of government and the 100-day review was undertaken to consider how all of the necessary venue infrastructure could be delivered within the \$7.1 billion funding envelope that had been agreed with the Commonwealth. No, construction had not commenced. I think one entity was in the process of being relocated to make way for a development, but venue construction had not commenced, no.

**CHAIR:** At the risk of sounding like I am channelling 'Big Kev', I have to say that I am excited to be part of a government that does what it says it is going to do and has delivered on the 100-day commitment to deliver the report as promised. Can you tell us about the new structure and the games leadership group? Who is on that and how does that fit with the other agencies?

**Ms Buckley:** The games leadership group comprises all three levels of government; the presidents of the organising committee, referred to as the 'corporation' under the act; and the chair of GIICA, or the 'authority' under the act. It is a small group. It is really charged with strategic direction and big focus on coordination across the various functional areas and an escalation point, so if there are any differences of opinion along the way we will have that one body that really has a lot of the financial and delivery risk associated with putting on the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games. There are a lot of acronyms out there, but that is the governance leadership group and sitting underneath that will be an executive group, so the equivalent directors-general and CEOs will sit under that as well.

**CHAIR:** And who are the members of that games leadership group?

**Ms Buckley:** You will see in the legislation that there will be a representative from the federal government, a representative from the state government, the Brisbane Lord Mayor, the president of the corporation and the chair of the authority. Just to be clear, it says at least one for the federals and Queensland, and that is about futureproofing the legislation, because obviously at this point of time

in our games planning it is all about venues and infrastructure and building those venues and villages. As we get closer to the delivery end, there might be different government departments that are more relevant to sit on that games leadership group, so it is at least one.

**Ms BUSH:** This government also said it was going to be transparent. Leah, from what I think I heard you say in the implementation and planning of this bill, it sounds like only GIICA was consulted with in the development of the bill, particularly in the elements around the new planning and approval powers that are related to Olympics infrastructure; is that correct?

**Ms Kelly:** We consulted with GIICA before the introduction of the bill. The Australian government was in caretaker mode, so we spoke to officials for that. In relation to transparency, I reflect on the member for Kurwongbah's question and just clarify that cultural heritage management plans prepared in accordance with the modified process outlined in the bill will ensure the state's duty of care obligations are met. Finalised plans will be uploaded to the Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multiculturalism's website—that is, the cultural heritage management plan register—so they will be available. The requirement for the government to clearly set out what the venues master plans look like and what needs to be delivered in time for the games was clearly set out in the games delivery plan and to GIICA as part of the 100-day review, where they were tasked with assessing those infrastructure requirements in terms of what was needed for the games for infrastructure, for governance and for other matters and they had over 5,800 submissions as part of that process about getting on with the delivery of venues and ensuring there was that clear plan for delivery.

**Ms BUSH:** Thank you, but just to confirm: it was only GIICA that helped inform the development of the bill as it stands in front of us?

**Ms Kelly:** It was developed through the agency with the objective of ensuring streamlined approval pathways for games infrastructure to deliver on the games delivery plan in time for the games.

**CHAIR:** I think all Queenslanders made some comment about the Olympic Games on 26 October last year and it was certainly of great interest.

**Mr JAMES:** Before the 100-day review, did the former government have any contracts or agreements in place, for example, to build any of the athletes villages?

**Ms Kelly:** For the athlete villages, the only commitment was in relation to Economic Development Queensland having received funding to do the Northshore Brisbane Street Renewal Program, so they were developing roads and pathways to prepare the site for the village as it was planned to be located at the time, but there were not any other construction contracts or other commitments entered into in relation to the villages.

**Mr MELLISH:** Just shifting over to Economic Development Queensland amendments, in relation to the changes around existing safeguards around dismissing the EDQ CEO and board members, what is the department's rationale for removing the existing safeguards around that?

**Mr Ferris:** The amendments that form part of this bill are very much focused on promoting efficiency around those processes. The member will be aware that in the existing legislation there is a whole range of limited circumstances in which either a board member or a CEO can be removed. The amendments that are proposed as part of the bill remove those limited circumstances and provide for the Governor in Council to be able to remove a board, CEO or acting CEO at any time.

**Mr MELLISH:** Sure, but I suppose my question is around allowing government to remove the CEO for any rationale at any time. Does that reduce the independence of EDQ going forward?

**Mr Ferris:** I think that is probably a question of policy, Chair, but what I would say—

**CHAIR:** That is probably a matter for the minister, I think. I think that would be a question for the minister, really.

**Mr Ferris:** Possibly, but what I can do is turn the committee's attention to various other boards that exist currently in Queensland. For example, under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act, the same provision that we are proposing as part of this bill in relation to directors and board members of WorkCover Queensland is what is proposed as part of our bill, so essentially a mechanism for the Governor in Council to at any time remove a board member, a CEO or an acting CEO.

**Mr MELLISH:** Will there be any mandatory qualifications or experience for EDQ board members and the CEO or is that open to the minister's discretion?

**Mr Ferris:** That remains unchanged, so it is just in relation to the removal of the board, the CEO or the acting CEO. The existing act outlines that those appointees are to have experience in, for example, local government, land use planning, law, economics, accounting, community development, natural resource and environmental resource management, business or financial management or any other qualifications or experience that the Governor in Council deems to be appropriate, so those remain unchanged for the purposes of the bill.

**CHAIR:** I want to clarify the make-up of that board in terms of delegated authority or positions and people who have to attend those meetings. There are some changes in that regard. Could you outline those to the committee?

**Mr Ferris:** And there are some changes that are proposed as part of this bill. The changes relate to the ability for the two government members—so the Under Treasurer and the chief executive of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning—to allow for a proxy to attend those meetings on their behalf. In the way that it will operate under the bill, the proxy can attend and can vote on behalf of the member they are attending those meetings on behalf of. It also ensures that a quorum for those board meetings is achieved so that the board can then function as intended. The purpose behind that is to ensure a level of efficiency where there are clashes. For example, the EDQ board has been known to meet at the same time as other boards where those particular government members are at alternate meetings or could be drawn to alternate meetings, so it is important that the board is able to function. When they are expected to have six meetings on a per annum basis, we do not want that board to be meeting less than is required or not being able to achieve a quorum for important decisions that the board takes.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Chair, just off the back of a question you asked a while ago in relation to the delivery timeline risk, I am just wondering whether any risk analysis was undertaken in the preparation of this bill and to what extent the bill will now bring more certainty to the games being delivered on time, or is there still a substantial risk that we face?

**Ms Kelly:** I have talked to the size and complexity of the infrastructure investment and number of projects required for successful games delivery. Those are also projects that deliver that infrastructure for a growing Queensland and it is important that it is available to communities. It is important to ensure a clear pathway for delivery and have that appropriate oversight and clear accountability as outlined in the legislation. The games delivery plan clearly sets out those infrastructure requirements and acknowledges the respective roles and responsibilities and provides clarity of governance to streamline and ensure decision-making can be undertaken effectively and that direction can be provided.

We talked about the games leadership group being important as a function to ensure that cross-partner matters are dealt with efficiently and expeditiously. There is time to deliver the venues, villages and games related transport infrastructure for the games, but it is really important that that work gets underway as soon as possible. Given the scope of that infrastructure across Queensland and the significant number of projects, it is really critical that work progresses and construction commences and that those projects are able to be delivered to ensure the state government meets its extensive commitments for delivery of the games.

**Mr KEMPTON:** So just taking words out of that response, not only is the bill timely but it would appear to me to be critical as well.

**Ms Kelly:** Yes, it is required in that some of the venues are very large—both venues and the villages themselves, as well as some of the transport projects that are outlined in the games delivery plan—and it is absolutely critical that they can be delivered efficiently and on time. Some of them are multibillion dollar projects with complex procurement and contracting requirements that require significant workforces and it is really important that they are progressed. We have lots of significant infrastructure projects in Queensland, but the games are unique, with a fixed delivery timeframe and also the specific games requirements that do not exist for other types of infrastructure, so to achieve that complexity in the timeframes the plan is clear on that infrastructure and we need to ensure we are facilitating getting on with it in a timely fashion.

**Ms BUSH:** Just in relation to, I think, the member for Kurwongbah's questions around cultural and heritage value and considerations with the Olympic planning, obviously Victoria Park is just outside of my electorate but has incredible cultural and heritage significance. I also understand that in the Redlands area, where they are looking at the whitewater venue at the moment, Redland City Council is having to work with the heritage department. I think they are removing some particular items that are heritage listed and having to work alongside them to make sure they are cared for in

accordance with the Heritage Act. I guess I am concerned about that particular venue and what is going to happen with that work and also with Victoria Park. How is the department going to ensure that items that are of real heritage or cultural value are treated with sensitivity?

**Ms Kelly:** The feasibility and design process as required for the infrastructure will consider key matters such as impacts on the environment and cultural heritage matters. The bill does set out that modified process for consideration of cultural heritage matters and sets out a process for engagement and seeking to reach those agreements. It sets out a timeframe whereby a plan will be required if agreement cannot be reached in that timeframe, so it does incorporate features of requirements of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act and the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act to ensure that those are complied with.

Under existing Queensland planning and environmental legislation, development is able to occur in sensitive areas, subject to working through relevant matters that may apply there. Under the proposed bill amendments, matters will still be considered in the planning; it will just ensure there is that streamlined process for GICA and government to ensure that they can consider those impacts but that the infrastructure is delivered in time for the games. It is about appropriate planning and considering the complexity of this infrastructure that is required but ensuring there is a streamlined approval process to deliver in time for the games.

**Ms BUSH:** Yes, but you certainly do not anticipate that items of cultural significance will be able to just be smashed through and not cared for in order to get stadiums up, I guess?

**Ms Kelly:** For all venues the processes under the act—the requirements to consider siting and technical costs and other risk elements—will be considered by GICA or by agencies undertaking planning for those projects. It is about some of those third-party appeal or other matters that can delay delivery of infrastructure where we are seeking to ensure the streamlined pathway applies.

**Ms BUSH:** I guess I am struggling a little bit with the bill and elements of it. I certainly do not want to suggest that I am not in favour of parts of it in the interrogation of it, but it seems we are saying on the one hand that renewable energy projects are incredibly big projects of state significance that have an impact on local communities and so we need more communication and consultation with communities, but then we are also saying that Olympic stadiums are also of state significance and they have an impact on local communities too but we are almost removing the right of communities to have a say on those stadiums. How does the department reconcile those two, I feel, competing elements of the bill?

**CHAIR:** Deputy Chair, that question is probably a matter of policy and we are currently receiving submissions regarding this bill, so it is not fair to ask the question and suggest that the department are not making inquiries with others.

**Ms BUSH:** I am just curious because the department drafted the bill. I am interested—and I am sure Peta can answer it—in how you have managed to reconcile that.

**CHAIR:** Deputy Director-General?

**Ms Harwood:** Wind farms and solar farms are over many hectares and even a large venue is not anywhere near the size of these projects. Transporting huge wind turbines all the way from the port into these rural communities has a much more significant impact than I think you would expect from construction in a city of an arena, so I do not think we are comparing like for like in terms of the projects.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. Whilst I have a lot of different questions, there will be opportunity on another day. Thank you so very much for appearing before us today. Thank you for your efforts in getting the games back on track and also giving our communities some say in some of the renewables projects. That concludes our questions and these proceedings. Thank you to everyone who has participated today. There are no questions on notice, which is great. Thank you to our Hansard reporters and broadcast staff for their assistance. A transcript of today's briefing will be available on the committee's webpage in due course. I declare the public briefing closed.

**The committee adjourned at 3.01 pm.**