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STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY SUB-COMMITTEE

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Members present:

Mr GE Malone MP (Chair)
Mr MJ Hart MP
Ms KN Millard MP
Mr BC Young MP (via teleconference)

Staff present:

Dr K Munro (Research Director)
Ms M Telford (Principal Research Officer)
Ms M Westcott (Principal Research Officer)

PRIVATE BRIEFING—INQUIRY INTO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL 2012

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

FRIDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2012

Brisbane

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Committee met at 1.18 pm

ALCORN, Mr Ross, Policy Manager, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning

BROE, Mr Barry, Coordinator-General, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning

EADES, Mr David, Deputy Director-General, Major Projects Office, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning

EAGLES, Mr Paul, Deputy Director-General, Planning, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning

GRADY, Mr Bruce, Assistant Director-General, Emergency Management Queensland

NICHOLS, Ms Elisa, Executive Director, Reform and Innovation, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

CHAIR: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I declare open the private briefing for the committee's inquiry into the Economic Development Bill 2012. Thank you for accepting the committee's invitation to appear before the committee. The State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee has appointed a subcommittee to conduct the examination of the bill. My name is Ted Malone and I am the chair of the committee. I would like to introduce the other members of the subcommittee: Mr Michael Hart, the member for Burleigh; Ms Kerry Millard, the member for Sandgate; and Mr Bruce Young, the member for Keppel, who is on speaker phone.

The State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee is a committee of the Queensland parliament and as such represents the parliament. It is an all-party committee which adopts a non-partisan approach to its proceedings. The committee's responsibility under the Parliament of Queensland Act is to examine policy to be given effect by the Economic Development Bill 2012 and the application of fundamental legislative principles.

Although the committee is not swearing in witnesses, I remind all that this briefing is a formal process of the parliament and, as such, any person intentionally misleading the committee is committing a serious offence. Hansard will be making a transcript of today's briefing. I therefore ask you to please identify yourself when you first speak and to speak clearly and at a reasonable pace. It is the committee's intention that the transcript of the hearing be published. Before we commence, I ask that mobile phones be switched off or put on silent mode. Would somebody like to make an opening statement to get us underway?

Mr Eades: I am happy to roll straight in, Chair, if that suits. My name is David Eades. I am the Deputy Director-General, Major Projects Office, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. I thank the committee for the opportunity to provide a briefing regarding the Economic Development Bill 2012. Recognising that the bill was only introduced yesterday, I will, with your permission, Chair, provide an overview of the bill as a starting point for the briefing today. Before I do so, I would like to introduce my colleagues: Mr Barry Broe, Coordinator-General, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning; Mr Paul Eagles, Deputy Director-General, Planning, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning; Mr Bruce Grady, Assistant Director-General, Emergency Management Queensland; Ms Elisa Nichols, Executive Director, Reform and Innovation, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection; Mr Ross Alcorn, Policy Manager, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning; and also a number of observers from those various departments.

The bill primarily amends legislation administered under the State Development, Infrastructure and Planning portfolio to assist government to drive economic development in Queensland. It has at its core a re-emphasis on supporting, facilitating and fast-tracking economic development in this state. The bill includes amendments from other departments that will also contribute to the government's economic and community development objectives. It also contains legislative changes to continue the vital rebuilding work of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and to implement particular recommendations made to the Queensland Floods Reconstruction of Inquiry report.

As the Deputy Premier indicated in the House yesterday, the Economic Development Bill refines and improves existing processes. It will also streamline the legislative framework and reduce red tape. If enacted, the bill will repeal the Industrial Development Act 1963 and the Urban Land Development Authority 2007 to establish a single Economic Development Act. By integrating and modernising key provisions of these acts, the bill will enable particular developments to be fast-tracked to meet the government's priorities for economic development and development for community purposes.

It contemplates the property and infrastructure development powers being used in circumstances of market failure, of complexity or where local government or industry requests assistance of specialist skills. The bill establishes the Minister for Economic Development Queensland, or MEDQ, a corporation sole, to replace the Minister for Industrial Development of Queensland. The bill provides the MEDQ with the ability to deal commercially in land, property and infrastructure to encourage economic development and development for community purposes. The model will be used to implement the government's policy priorities. The combining of these existing acts and the entities that were established under them recognises the synergies between the two entities that existed under the former model and will allow for improved operational efficiencies and an integrated approach to economic and community development.

Operationally, Economic Development Queensland, as a commercialised business unit of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, will assume responsibility for bringing developments to market quickly under the guidance and direction of an Economic Development Board and the MEDQ. The Economic Development Board and Economic Development Queensland will exercise functions of the MEDQ under instruments of delegation. Economic Development Queensland will continue the same commercial arrangements as the existing Property Services Group in the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning in addition to the planning and development activities currently undertaken by the Urban Land Development Authority but with a broader remit that could include all classes of land, infrastructure or buildings.

The bill proposes that the Economic Development Board will comprise up to six members, with three specified members being the director-general of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, who will be the chair; the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet; and the Under Treasurer of Queensland. Other members may be appointed to the board by the Governor in Council.

The bill also proposes the establishment of the Commonwealth Games Infrastructure Authority. The authority is a board that will assist the MEDQ in relation to the planning and development of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games village and potentially other venues required for the games. The authority will report to the MEDQ and the Economic Development Board. This model will enable the functions and powers of MEDQ and the governance arrangements under the bill to be utilised for the purposes of planning and development of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games village and other venues if necessary.

That authority will comprise the director-general of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning; the director-general of the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games; and the chief executive of the Gold Coast City Council. It is contemplated that the chairperson of the Commonwealth Games Corporation and other members be appointed by Governor in Council.

Importantly, the bill mandates that the MEDQ's functions include consulting with local governments in planning for or developing land in priority development areas. It also specifically requires the MEDQ to consult with relevant local governments when preparing a development scheme for the declaration of a priority development area. The MEDQ will also have the ability to establish more formal consultation arrangements. Specifically, the bill provides for the MEDQ to establish local representative committees by discretion and on a case-by-case basis, thus providing a mechanism for local government engagement in planning, development assessment and activities of the MEDQ in their areas.

Transitioning the planning and development powers and activities of the Urban Land Development Authority to the MEDQ will help deliver on the government's policy to wind back the operations of the current Urban Land Development Authority while ensuring maintenance of a streamlined, agile and effective planning and development framework for priority projects. To this effect, the bill provides for the declaration of priority development areas for the purpose of fast-tracking planning and development in discrete sites.

The bill also provides for the declaration of provisional priority development areas which are intended to apply in very limited circumstances and only where development can be brought to the market quickly. This type of priority development area would only be declared where the development is consistent with community expectations as expressed in the local government planning scheme. The development sites are generally small, distinct sites containing single uses where development can be progressed swiftly using the planning and development assessment regime of this proposed act and brought to the market generally within the life of the provisional priority development area.

The bill amends other acts. Chair, with your permission, I will hand over to my colleague Barry Broe, Coordinator-General, who will describe proposed amendments in the bill to the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971.

CHAIR: Thanks, David. Welcome Barry.

Mr Broe: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today to the amendments. The bill amends the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 to do four things primarily: firstly, to clarify and improve the powers of the Coordinator-General to fast-track projects; secondly, to better reflect government policies and priorities; thirdly, to streamline and clarify assessment processes; and, fourthly, to prevent proponents from misusing the intent of the Coordinator-General's statutory powers to promote their individual projects therefore diverting limited government resources and causing confusion for landowners and industry.

There are six main amendments: firstly, to rename significant projects to coordinated projects to remove any perception that they have an approval or level of state support; secondly, to adopt more robust criteria for consideration of which projects should be coordinated projects as declared by the Coordinator-General; thirdly, to rename and substantially restructure the process for consideration of an infrastructure facility of significance to protect landowners and achieve a more effective logical planning process; fourthly, to provide an approved fee amendment process by providing a head of power for fees to be contained in a regulation rather than within the act, thus achieving a more flexible and efficient process; fifthly, to provide process improvements to better enable the Coordinator-General to streamline environmental impact statement assessment processes; and, finally, to approve short-term leases for land held by the Coordinator-General in state development areas to allow these matters to be expedited and dealt with more efficiently. That is a brief summary and I will leave it at that.

Mr Eades: Chair, with your forbearance, I will now briefly summarise the amendments to other acts in the bill before describing the consultation that has occurred to date regarding the bill. Firstly, I turn to the South Bank Corporation Act of 1989. The bill amends the South Bank Corporation Act 1989. The objectives of the amendment to this act contained in the bill are to commence the process for transferring planning powers from the South Bank Corporation to Brisbane City Council, protect and confirm any existing or previous approvals and pre-existing uses, streamline the make-up of the South Bank Corporation board, enable the South Bank Corporation board to transfer a freehold interest in land with the minister's consent, ensure that there are no impediments to the South Bank Corporation board's ability to grant a lease of the parklands to Brisbane City Council and to contract it to the obligations to manage the parkland, and ensure that the parklands' security officers engaged by the Brisbane City Council for the South Bank Parklands also have the ability to exercise the powers given to the South Bank Corporation in its act to engage security officers under that current act. These are primarily exclusion powers.

Secondly, the bill amends the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011. The bill recognises that the work of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority in rebuilding vital community infrastructure needs to continue by extending the expiry date of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011 to 30 June 2014. The authority will then cease in line with the government's previous commitment.

Thirdly, the bill also amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to implement Floods Commission of Inquiry report recommendations to provide for the issue of temporary emission licences to allow for temporary discharges as part of the response to an emergency event including after an emergency has ended. The amendment also provides a definition of the term 'emergency' and permits an emergency direction to be given orally to address other recommendations of the Floods Commission of Inquiry report.

Further, the bill amends the Disaster Management Act 2003 to implement Floods Commission of Inquiry report recommendations to give the director-general of the Department of Community Safety the ability to appoint an officer of Emergency Management Queensland to coordinate State Emergency Service's operations in extraordinary circumstances.

The focus of consultation for the provisions to establish an economic development act was government agencies, entities and statutory bodies including central agencies such as the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Treasury and Trade as well as the Property Services Group and obviously the Urban Land Development Authority. This is pertinent given that the proposed new act integrates existing legislative and operational arrangements and fulfils government election commitments relating to the winding back of the Urban Land Development Authority and the commitment to drive economic growth.

During the course of identifying the objectives of the legislative requirements and the drafting of the bill, the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning has consulted with Brisbane City Council in relation to the amendments of the South Bank Corporation Act with consideration given to the matters raised by that council. The department also consulted with relevant state agencies, including the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Queensland Treasury and Trade on these proposed amendments. The central government agencies of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Queensland Treasury and Trade including Projects Queensland were consulted on the amendments to the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act. External consultation is also occurring with Queensland Resources Council.

The amendments to the Environmental Protection Act were developed in consultation with the Australian Industry Group, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, Queensland Farmers Federation, Queensland Resources Council, Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of Queensland Incorporated, the Local Government Association of Queensland and Queensland government departments.

In developing the options for legislative amendment in response to the Floods Commission of Inquiry recommendations, a discussion paper was also developed and distributed to internal and external stakeholders for consultation. In relation to the amendments to the Disaster Management Act, the Department of Community Safety through Emergency Management Queensland formally consulted with all local governments between 23 August 2012 and 12 September 2012.

In conclusion, I thank the committee for the opportunity to provide a briefing today on the Economic Development Bill 2012 and, through you, ask if the committee has any questions for the department or any of the other departments here today.

CHAIR: The committee is very grateful for the very short notice in which you were able to come to us and brief us. Because of the tight time lines, obviously the committee would like to get a briefing fairly quickly. I really do appreciate you pulling people together to do that.

Mr Eades: Our pleasure.

CHAIR: The bill has many facets. From my point of view and that of the committee, we need to get a handle on how it will operate. In relation to the issue of transferring South Bank to the Brisbane City Council and the issue of the parklands, et cetera and freehold land, roughly what amount of land is freehold on South Bank? Do you have any idea? Is it a third or a quarter?

Mr Eades: The South Bank Corporation holds all of the declared area in freehold, but the issue is that under the current legislation it cannot transfer land in freehold to anybody else. So the proposed reduction in South Bank Corporation and its ultimate winding-up requires transferring a lot of commercial assets out of South Bank Corporation's hands. The parklands will remain in state government ownership and there will be a lease in place with maintenance requirements to council. As well as that, obviously the planning powers get transferred. Council will only be able to administer the existing approved development plan over parklands. I guess the aim ultimately is to roll South Bank into the city of Brisbane plan so it becomes, in effect, like any other suburb in Brisbane.

CHAIR: Is there any freehold in South Bank that is actually held by somebody else? I understand there was a sale of land to ABC or to the Commonwealth in respect of the studios there, or was that under a leaseback?

Mr Eades: I believe that was a long-term lease. There is one remaining development parcel in South Bank that remains undeveloped—it is a major development parcel—and that is the Southpoint site, which is still under contractual arrangements.

CHAIR: In terms of the amendment to the Disaster Management Act that puts in place a coordinator, my understanding from my days as a shadow is that when a disaster occurs the police have the ultimate control of a disaster. Does that change that relationship at all?

Mr Eades: With your forbearance I will transfer that question to Bruce.

Mr Grady: In answer to the question, no, it makes no changes. The role of the police in that function is really around disaster management. That is the overall coordination of the resources et cetera that need to be applied to the disaster response. What we are talking about here is very specifically the SES, the State Emergency Service, response. The amendments are designed for a circumstance where a local community and their local SES may become overwhelmed by the size or scale of the event and we have to deploy additional SES groups to provide assistance.

What we saw and why this came as a recommendation from the Floods Commission of Inquiry report is that, as we moved additional resources in, there was some confusion over who was going to manage them, who was going to coordinate them and making sure they were as effective as possible. The amendment is, in fact, to put in place a mechanism so that the SES element of the overall response can be managed and coordinated to the best effect.

CHAIR: That is interesting because in actual fact one of the criticisms was that, when the volunteers came in, whether they were SES or rural fire people, they were not well coordinated, they were unused for a lot of the term or they were not properly directed. That is where that came from I am assuming.

Mr Grady: Absolutely, and this amendment is to directly deal with that. We have been very careful in the consultation process to ensure that the primacy of local response is maintained. This is not an amendment that seeks to put in place a command and control mechanism in place of the local. It is to simply support an augmented response should the scale of the event require that.

CHAIR: One of the criticisms of The Gap disaster where they had trees all over the place was that rural fires came in and they were not directed at all. They ended up cutting trees down for neighbours and that sort of stuff. I can totally understand now where that is coming from.

Mr HART: Mr Grady, who will take control? Are we talking about police, the fire department or professional SES staff?

Mr Grady: The recommendation from the flood commission specified Emergency Management Queensland. We have broadened that to the director-general can make an appointment for someone who holds the appropriate skills and capability. It may well be that an SES volunteer does hold those skills. Part of this is that we will provide training for that particular function so that people are skilled up.

Mr HART: The SES does have professionally based staff, do they not?

Mr Grady: Some local government—

Mr HART: Do they have any direct control over SES elements at the moment?

Mr Grady: Certainly over their own. I think what you are referring to is a number of local controllers are actually employed by council on a permanent basis. Those local controllers hold the command and control of their units and groups. So all the SES members within that local government area are under the command and control, if you like, of the SES local controller.

Mr HART: Are there similar people in the Queensland government SES?

Mr Grady: There is one SES.

Mr HART: It is my understanding that, on the Gold Coast where I am from, there are local or regional SES controllers that do not actually have any direct control over the volunteers in the SES. Is that incorrect?

Mr Grady: No, what we have is a volunteer group and they have a volunteer local controller. Some of those are paid, but as far as the act is concerned we treat them all as volunteers. Within the local government boundary, all of the SES volunteers come under the command of the local controller. Emergency Management Queensland, with our paid staff, provide support; we provide training assistance; we provide equipment; we assist the local controller to fulfil their functions. What this amendment seeks to apply is—for example, if there was a major flood on the Gold Coast such that we had to bring 400 or 500 additional SES into the Gold Coast to assist with the response and the clean-up, then we would appoint an SES coordinator to manage all of those resources that were in the Gold Coast for that event.

Mr HART: How will that work during an event, or will this be done prior to an event or be on standby sort of thing?

Mr Grady: This will only be applied in extraordinary circumstances and will only be applied in consultation with the local disaster management group.

Mr HART: During an event?

Mr Grady: Yes. This can happen very quickly.

Mr HART: Are you going to throw someone in total control of a group of volunteers as an event happens?

Mr Grady: That is right, but these will be people who are trained and competent to undertake that role.

Mr HART: Will they take control of SES volunteers or professionals from other states as well?

Mr Grady: There are other volunteers—and this is only the SES. So if a Rural Fire Service, for example, were to come in and provide assistance, they would be under their own command. But if we were to bring SES volunteers from interstate, for example, then the SES coordinator that had been appointed would have the overall coordination of all of those resources.

Mr HART: Have the local SES groups been consulted about this?

Mr Grady: All local governments have been consulted. Of those, 33 chose to respond and 32 indicated that they were supportive or they thought it was favourable.

CHAIR: The filter down would be through the controllers?

Mr Grady: That is right.

CHAIR: They would not actually be in control of the individual—

Mr Grady:—of the individual member.

CHAIR: So they would take overall control so authority would actually filter down through your controllers then on to the volunteers.

Mr Grady: That is right. You would have a span of control, so the coordinator would be coordinating four, five, six or more local controllers or volunteer executives. They would then lead their volunteers on the ground. A lot of this is to do with the support mechanisms that are needed. We bring volunteers in and they need accommodation, feeding and equipment—they need all of those things—plus all of the tasking that comes in needs to be prioritised and coordinated.

CHAIR: Have you got any questions, Bruce?

Mr YOUNG: Not yet.

CHAIR: Are there any other questions?

Mr HART: I have quite a few other questions, not to do with the SES though.

CHAIR: Are we all clear with the SES?

Mr HART: Yes, thanks.

CHAIR: That is fine then. Barry, I might lead off with you. As you know, I have got a fairly great concern about land protection and farmers' rights et cetera. I heard you mention protecting landholders as part of the charter in this bill. Could you expand on that a bit please?

Mr Broe: Currently, there is a key provision in the act called an infrastructure facility of significance, which is all about requesting that a Coordinator-General acquire land from private landowners for a private facility. The act changes that name to a private infrastructure facility and dramatically changes the process in a number of ways. First of all, in the future, a proponent will have to complete a full environmental impact study and get an approved Coordinator-General's report before even applying for a private infrastructure facility. What has happened in the past is that, way before that stage on occasions, a proponent will apply for what used to be called an IFS—an infrastructure facility of significance—and if it was granted they would then tend to use that, I guess, badge or approval in negotiation with landowners, often in advance of knowing what the actual land requirements were. What this does is it ensures that the planning process is completed, that the land requirements are absolutely determined and justified, so there will be much stronger criteria in the act for the Coordinator-General recommending to the Governor in Council that a facility be actually nominated as a private infrastructure facility, and then in the next stage of the process the Coordinator-General can consider application to acquire the land.

One other key requirement now is that, prior to even applying for a private infrastructure facility, some initial negotiation has to occur with landowners—before even getting to the stage of putting in an application. When the Coordinator-General receives an application, the Coordinator-General can already see that some attempt has been made to acquire the land by negotiation. So there are much stricter requirements all around in the way the Coordinator-General recommending to the minister and Governor in Council that a project be deemed a private infrastructure facility, and then the checks and balances after that are fairly robust on the processes a proponent must go through to negotiate so landowners are much better protected.

CHAIR: Just picking up on that, what you are saying basically is that the proponent has to have tried to acquire that corridor or whatever previous to you getting involved?

Mr Broe: Exactly. They have to have an approved Coordinator-General's report and they have to complete a full environmental impact study showing that this is their project, they have done the planning and the land is needed. Before even applying to the Coordinator-General for a private infrastructure facility, they must have completed commercial negotiations with landowners. Of course, this time they will not have a badge of an infrastructure facility of significance; they will be there just as a private proponent trying to develop a project.

CHAIR: You would assume then that the compensation paid to the landholder would be almost at a commercial rate. If they have to deal with the landholder upfront to start with and it falls over and the Coordinator-General gets involved, it will be a commercial rate.

Mr Broe: Yes. It will be a commercial negotiation between the private proponent and the landowner, and there will not be a misperception that the government is supporting the project or giving it some tag of significance.

CHAIR: I notice also at point No. 5 that you spoke about the ability to actually short-term lease property owned by the government. That comes under another inquiry we have in terms of land tenure. I assume what you are saying is that, if you acquire some land and you need to short-term lease it off to a grazier or whatever, you have the ability to do that. Is that right?

Mr Broe: This is related to state development areas where the Coordinator-General holds land. If the Coordinator-General wants to give a short-term lease, up to four years, to a proponent currently, it has to go to Governor in Council for approval. So it is a more efficient administrative process to allow the Coordinator-General to actually make those approvals himself or herself rather than go to Governor in Council.

CHAIR: It takes the red tape out of it, in other words.

Mr Broe: Yes, it streamlines and shortens it.

Mr HART: With regard to the changes that are being made that we were just discussing then, does the Sustainable Planning Act that has just gone through parliament reverse the position on government land back the other way? I think from memory you do not have to have government approval for land to be declared a significant project. Am I thinking straight about that? That was in the Sustainable Planning Act that has only just gone through parliament. Does that ring a bell with anybody?

Mr Eades: No.

Mr Broe: Not really. Maybe you could expand a bit more.

Mr HART: I seem to remember something in there that there was a requirement to have approval for government land before you went and got a—

Dr Munro: A resource allocation.

Mr HART: A resource allocation, yes. Does that conflict with that position of the bill we just passed? Are we talking about something completely different?

Mr Eagles: I think what the member might be referring to is that, in the SPOLA Bill, the requirement to have resource entitlement prior to lodging a development application was changed so that it could be done concurrent, at the same time, as the lodging of a development application. So it is not the same as or relevant to this.

Mr HART: It is the reverse position though, isn't it?

Mr Broe: My understanding of what you are talking about is a later stage in the process. When projects are declared by the Coordinator-General, they go through an environmental impact statement process, they go through a planning process, then they get an approval from the Coordinator-General, then subsequently they go through various approvals to get development approvals and actually start building it. I suspect you are talking about a later stage in the actual planning and construction of the facility.

Mr HART: It might well be. I do not know a great deal about all of this stuff.

Mr Eades: I think Paul is right. Previously, there was a requirement to get a resource entitlement before you could lodge, and to short-circuit that really those processes can now run in parallel. As Barry said, irrespective of whether it is within an area controlled by the Coordinator-General or outside of that, that is part of the development approval process. Where government becomes involved is where there would be a need for a resource entitlement to allow a project to proceed, and that could be something like a seabed lease, access to other government land or airspace et cetera.

Mr HART: Being a member from the Gold Coast—and I recognise this has not actually been formally released yet—the TV is telling us that there will be a cruise ship terminal on the Gold Coast. How will the changes to the Coordinator-General's role reflect those sorts of developments in the future? Will you still have the same sort of role?

Mr Broe: The overall intent of the changes to the act, as I described, are to clarify and improve the powers of the Coordinator-General to streamline or fast-track projects. If there was a cruise ship terminal proposal and the proponents submitted an initial advice statement to the Coordinator-General looking for it to be declared as a coordinator project, then the Coordinator-General would look at it and, if it was deemed to be a coordinator project, previously a significant project, then the Coordinator-General would coordinate all the environmental impact processes, coordinate and oversee the EIS. But it would depend.

A project like the cruise ship terminal could have more involved than simply major infrastructure, if there is a casino licence or other elements, so it would depend on the nature of the project. If it was submitted as a request for a coordinator project, the Coordinator-General would decide on it and if it was declared as a coordinator project then coordinate all of the government assessment of the environmental impact statement. Any major project like that would be almost certain to require an environmental impact study. The Coordinator-General has also got very strong links with the Commonwealth, so if there were Commonwealth issues involved, they would also streamline and be able to bring in the Commonwealth and other agencies who need to be involved.

Ms MILLARD: You mentioned providing some short-term leases of roughly four years. Can you give an example of why you would do that and what the benefit of that would be?

Mr Broe: The Coordinator-General holds land in state development areas, and I guess the whole purpose of having state development areas of land is to use them for economic activity. If they have some possible long-term use, that is fine. But if there is a short-term potential to use the land and a proponent wants to use the land for some reason, then giving a proponent a short-term lease to use it for some purpose achieves an objective of allowing them to actually use it. This is purely an administrative change to ensure that, for these short-term leases of up to four years, the Coordinator-General can decide on them without having to burden the Governor in Council in such matters.

CHAIR: Would that be a competitive type thing or would the lease be in a proponent's name that they were going to build a project on it? How would that actually come about, Barry?

Mr Eades: There are various circumstances in which that could come about. It could be leased to a previous owner whose land has been acquired and is not required immediately. Clearly, that would be a negotiated arrangement because of that relationship. Other circumstances would be where there is simply land available in an area which may be available, for example, for agistment to reduce the government's cost of maintenance. Normally, you would expect that to go through some competitive process, but there are always circumstances where that will not be the case—such as where there is only one logical user and you cannot create a competitive environment.

Mr Broe: There is also a process within the act that has been strengthened where any proponent can apply for what is called a material change of use application within a state development area. So if they want to put forward a proposal to use the land for some purpose, then we assess that. The overall objective really is to try to make better use of these large areas in state development zones and try to maximise their potential for economic development.

Mr HART: You said during your opening statement that one of the reasons for the changes was to prevent proponents from misusing the fact that the item had been referred to the Coordinator-General. Can you expand on that?

Mr Broe: It is to prevent proponents from misusing the intent of the Coordinator-General's statutory powers. An example is that currently we have what is called significant projects. Going back to the cruise ship terminal, if a proponent submits an application to the Coordinator-General for a project to be declared a coordinated project—well, I will just stick with the term 'significant project' so I can explain how the old model had failings. If the Coordinator-General then declares that significant, what tended to happen on

occasions was there was a perception that it was significant and it had state approval and support and it was a priority for the state. But, in reality, a declaration really is about kick-starting an EIS process, so it is about starting a comprehensive environmental impact assessment process. That is all it effectively does. It does not imply any state support or priority, so I guess it created a misconception in places that it was a state priority and that really was not the case at all.

It is really about making sure that the proponent has whole-of-government coordination of approvals, otherwise they would have to go through individual agencies—like the environment department and the council—and try to pull together approvals for their project from a number of areas. In the end, that is really what the Coordinator-General's role is about—coordination of approvals and planning for major infrastructure projects.

CHAIR: In terms of the lease, I would assume that if it is leasehold land it will have native title implications so they would actually go with the lease. Would you be negotiating an ILUA on that as well? I suppose that will be for later on when that lease is developed into a project.

Mr Broe: As part of significant projects, the proponents are to deal with all native title issues and to negotiate with traditional owners and to generate those agreements. We can help where possible but it is really the proponents' responsibility.

CHAIR: Are there any other questions?

Mr HART: David, just going back to South Bank, you said that there would be a requirement to transfer freehold title from the South Bank Corporation to somebody else. Who would that somebody else be?

Mr Eades: To government.

Mr HART: Back to the state?

Mr Eades: Yes, back to the state. I have a point of reflection, Mr Chair, if I could, on the specific issue of the ABC site and my response earlier about South Bank Corporation holding land in freehold and basically only being able to lease. On reflection, the ABC site may be an anomaly to that, but I will check that out and come back to this committee.

CHAIR: I am not clear in my own mind just how that came together.

Mr Eades: No. We are dealing ostensibly with a lot of information on that and some of that was not correct, but with your forbearance I will come back to you on that.

CHAIR: That is fine. I was just trying to find an example that may be out of context in transferring the land back to the Brisbane City Council.

Mr HART: You had consultation with the Brisbane City Council. Was there any consultation with any other stakeholders? Is there anybody who might not be happy with this sort of thing, do you think?

Mr Eades: South Bank Corporation's operating model is fairly complex. You have leasehold arrangements with everyone from residential to retail to restaurants et cetera, and there are probably thousands of people who ultimately would be impacted. The approach is to try to ensure that, in the arrangements with Brisbane City Council, parkland continues to be maintained at its current level, continues to be activated with events and other things. You would hope that the broader community would see no real difference in the operation of the parkland. That is I guess where we are trying to get to.

Mr HART: You mentioned retail properties as well. Are they freehold?

Mr Eades: No.

Mr HART: So what happens with the ownership—

Mr Eades: All the investment properties at South Bank will basically transfer—

Mr HART: Back to the state again?

Mr Eades: Back to the state, yes.

Mr HART: So the South Bank Corporation would just dissolve?

Mr Eades: Correct.

CHAIR: In terms of shops at South Bank, they will see no real change at all?

Mr Eades: It will be hardly any different from a commercial situation where an owner sells a building to someone else.

Mr HART: As I said before I am pretty tired. With regard to the concept of a minister for economic development, are we talking about a person or are we talking about an entity? Can you just explain that to me?

Mr Eades: Ross is probably better equipped. It is a corporation sole.

Mr Alcorn: David is quite right. It is a corporation sole constituted singularly by the minister who is currently the Deputy Premier.

Mr HART: So the Deputy Premier will move from being the Minister for State Development to the minister for economic development Queensland; is that what you are saying?

Mr Alcorn: That is correct.

Mr HART: That makes sense.

Mr YOUNG: Mr Chair, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the information so far.

CHAIR: You have to round some cows up?

Mr YOUNG: No, I have people waiting.

CHAIR: That is fine. I was just having a go at you.

Mr YOUNG: Yes, I realise that.

CHAIR: Thanks for coming on board, Bruce. I appreciate it.

Mr YOUNG: Thank you.

Mr HART: You also said there were six members on the board of the MEDQ and there are some specified members. Who might the other members be? I am not asking for names; I am asking about what types of people the other members would be that we are talking about? Are we talking about individuals in the community? We are not talking members of government obviously.

Mr Eades: It is obviously a decision for the MEDQ at the end of the day, but I guess what would be contemplated in the initial phases is that it would be people with skills who are close to the processes that currently exist.

Mr HART: Are we talking executive members or volunteer members?

Mr Eades: That is really an issue for the Deputy Premier at the end of the day.

Mr HART: That would be both the boards that we talked about—similar sorts of things?

Mr Eades: Yes, both have a number of stipulated members and then it is really others appointed by Governor in Council on the recommendation of government.

CHAIR: Similar to hospital boards.

Mr HART: Is there any time frame on the Commonwealth Games Infrastructure Authority? Does it dissolve after the Commonwealth Games?

Mr Eades: That is the expectation at this point in time; that their job will be done once the games are over and the infrastructure is basically brought back into normal operation as part of the local authority.

Mr HART: Does the Commonwealth Games Infrastructure Authority own the facilities for the time being? How do the facilities, say the Southport pool, for instance—

Mr Eades: Most of those facilities will either be owned by whoever owns them now. It could be Gold Coast City Council or the state. Unless there are significant reasons why that should change, they will stay in that ownership.

Mr HART: Does the authority have some form of control over it until the Commonwealth Games are over?

Mr Eades: Its job is to deliver the infrastructure necessary for the games and obviously to negotiate with the current owners of those facilities their upgrade and their use during the period of the games. That will be done on a venue by venue basis.

CHAIR: On behalf of the deputy chair of the committee in respect of the fundamental legislative principles, I guess I should ask this question to you, David: do you believe the bill breaches any of those areas?

Mr Eades: Certainly none that we are aware of.

CHAIR: Would anyone else like to make a comment? Kerry, have you got any questions?

Ms MILLARD: No, I am fine.

CHAIR: That being the case, I really do appreciate the department making the time to meet with us today. As you are well aware, we have had a busy week and we really appreciate this hearing today. Because of the time lines, we need to get our head around the bill and sort out some of the issues. We really do appreciate not only the people sitting at the top table but also the others you brought with you.

I move that, pursuant to section 50(2)(a) of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, the committee authorise the publication of the public evidence given before it today. I now declare the meeting closed.

Committee adjourned at 2.07 pm