



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard 29 November 2001

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Port Pilotage

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (10.01 a.m.), by leave: Safe and sustainable shipping movements in Queensland waters are essential to support the economy of Queensland and the wellbeing of our community. Overseas trade underpins our quality of life and we must take all necessary steps to safeguard the movement of vessels in our ports and along our coast. This government is committed to ensuring the safety of vessel movements in Queensland waters. This means we must have a port pilotage service that operates with certainty and is not subject to pressures that could impact on performance. Commercial pressures inherent in the existing pilotage arrangements have recently led to difficulties at the Cairns Port Authority concerning the provision of pilotage at that port.

In addition to port pilotage, port authorities are also responsible for responding to marine pollution within their port limits. Port authority directors have expressed concern about potential liability this can bring. I am concerned that commercial pressures could impact on the commitment of port authorities to providing the highest possible standards of safety and responsiveness in their delivery of essential maritime services. A number of recent difficulties reflect deficiencies in the current model.

After considering the broad options available, my preferred approach, subject to consultation, is to set up a body within government which draws together our maritime experts to provide a state-wide port pilotage service and to prevent and respond to marine pollution wherever it occurs regardless of port limits. This body would report to me through the Director-General of Queensland Transport. It would include the core marine expertise of the current Maritime Division but have the necessary legal authorities for its wider role. Such an approach reflects international trends in provision of port pilotage and related services. It does not mean that our pilotage service will not be commercial. It will be provided on a commercial basis but it will not be subject to conflicting commercial pressures that could compromise the commitment to safety and the environment. Current commercial arrangements for the provision of port pilotage will be respected but responsibility for administration of the service will be moved to the new body.

We all remember the threat to the Great Barrier Reef from the grounding of the *Bunga Teratai Satu* and the fine response effort mounted by maritime officers of Queensland Transport. I propose to build on this by taking a comprehensive approach to marine safety and pollution response. At this stage I am flagging my preferred approach to form the basis for consultation. I have asked my department to proceed with consultation with industry groups, the ports and staff as a matter of priority.
