



Speech by

ANDREW McNAMARA

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

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PUBLIC RECORDS BILL

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (4.04 p.m.): I rise to support the Public Records Bill. I congratulate the minister and the government on their commitment to enhancing service delivery to Queenslanders through the use of new technologies. I will briefly address that aspect of the bill which concerns e-government and the handling of electronic records.

Government agencies are increasingly conducting business on line and providing electronic services to the Queensland community. The need to create dedicated legislation for the management of public records has become imperative in recent years, given the challenges of the technological environment. As information and communications technologies continue to evolve, it is critical that the state's legislative framework for record keeping remains relevant and effective.

The Public Records Bill provides the State Archivist with the authority to develop policies and standards for the management of electronic records. Such policies and standards will contribute to the success of government online initiatives and strategies for the Queensland community, and it is particularly welcome in regional areas such as Hervey Bay.

Operating in a dynamic electronic environment does not alter the need to capture, create and maintain records as evidence and memory. The Public Records Bill is technology neutral and focuses on the requirements for making, keeping and accessing records rather than on the media and technology used for generating, storing and using records.

In the business context, records play a critical role in the strategic use of information, customising services and products, improving the efficiency and reliability of public administration and developing trust among networked communities. All of these activities are facilitated and supported by sound record keeping practices. In order to achieve integrated online service delivery and maintain accountability and credibility, record keeping practices and systems must become consistent.

The Public Records Bill provides the legislative authority for Queensland State Archives to establish and implement a policy framework which incorporates specific standards and guidelines. These standards and guidelines will promote a consistent approach across Queensland for the management, storage, preservation and retrieval of technology dependent records such as electronic messages and web pages. It is also worth noting that the provisions of the bill complement the requirements of the Electronic Transactions (Queensland) Act 2001 for producing, recording, retaining and providing access to records generated in the course of electronic communications.

In conclusion, the need for government to create and maintain records applies in all technological environments in government where business is conducted. This legislation ensures that a whole-of-government record keeping policy framework is in place to support e-government initiatives. This framework will ensure that the business of government, particularly in the electronic environment, is adequately documented to support government accountability and business continuity. I commend the minister, his staff and his department for driving this important legislation, which is one of the enablers of the Smart State.
