



Speech by

**JO-ANN MILLER**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

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Hansard 26 November 2003

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL  
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**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (5.04 p.m.): I rise to support the Environmental Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2003. One of the major objectives of this bill is to make it easier for local governments to operate effectively under the Integrated Planning Act 1997. These reforms will simplify and clarify the existing provisions for the approval and assessment of environmentally relevant activities. As local governments administer the majority of approvals for environmentally relevant activities under the Environmental Protection Act 1994, of which there are approximately 8,500 across Queensland, it is imperative that administrative processes are consolidated to create an efficient, speedy and convenient system.

The improved integration of the IPA and EP Act will see the removal of dual approval processes and systems. This will provide significant cost savings to local government and will ensure consistency in how the legislation is applied to industry. Local governments will be able to issue all of the development requirements on the one approval, rather than the current system which requires both a development approval and an environmental authority. This will benefit local government by giving more time to assess higher risk activities.

Improving the interface between the Integrated Planning Act and the Environmental Protection Act will result in the introduction of an operator registration system. This new system is much simpler than the current environmental authority system and is strongly supported by local government and industry. The ease of this system will enable operator registration to be approved within short time frames and remove duplicate assessment considerations. The operator registration system retains the ability for administering authorities to check the suitability of the applicant based on their environmental record. The registration system will also enable operators of new level 2 activities to easily transfer their registration to a new operator. The ability to transfer their registration will save unnecessary industry fees and application requirements.

A significant reform will be achieved by this new registration system through the requirement that deemed activities be registered. Registration of such activities will ensure greater protection of the environment. When first introduced, these activities were deemed to be approved and did not warrant the submission of an application. This deemed approval resulted in administering authorities having environmental registers with incomplete information regarding the scale and location of environmentally relevant activities carried out in the local government area. The information obtained through registration of these activities will ensure the Queensland government, local government and the community have more information to monitor the environmental performance of these activities.

Local governments have requested greater clarity in processing contaminated land referrals. Through this bill, local government will receive greater contamination of the contaminated land referral arrangements to meet their environmental responsibilities. By providing clear guidance on the circumstances in which contaminated land matters must be referred to the EPA, local government will know what and when matters are required to be referred and will be able to identify the types of minor matters that do not require referral. This saves time and work for local government and their clients, and for Ipswich City Council it means more money for roads, footpaths and more money for kerbing, channelling and so on.

The government remains committed to keeping administrative costs to local government at a minimum. The bill provides costs savings for local governments and will improve the day-to-day operation of the approval and compliance systems without compromising local governments' current obligations. I would like to thank Minister Wells, his staff in his ministerial office, and officers of the department for their work on this bill. Ipswich City Council and other local authorities are the beneficiaries of their great work. I commend the bills to the House.