



Speech by


**Michael Pucci**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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## **WATER LEGISLATION (DAM SAFETY AND WATER SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (9.07 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Water Legislation (Dam Safety and Water Supply Enhancement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This amendment bill sets out to implement the recommendations laid out in the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry report. Just under two years ago, our state saw the most devastating floods in our nation's history. The devastation and impact those floods caused on Queenslanders, their livelihoods and the economy at large are well documented. On 16 March 2012 the QFCI released its 177 recommendations that were focused on the premise, events and aftermath of the 2010-11 floods.

Our government, in response to those findings, has supported all of the recommendations and outlined a framework for the implementation of the recommendations. Nine of those recommendations need stronger legislative support, and that is what this amendment bill sets out to provide. This amendment bill is about protecting Queenslanders. Like so many other legislative amendments passed by this House over past months, this amendment bill makes the right changes to better prepare and, most of all, provide the legislative tools and regulations to better protect Queenslanders for years to come. With the implementation of this bill, our government's legislative response to the inquiry's report will be on track, with an emphasis on the recommendations being implemented before the 2012-13 wet season. Though some of these recommendations with the aid of this legislation will represent a considerable task for our government over the coming months, much has already been achieved.

The state needs to be better placed to deal with any eventuality that may arise. For that preparation to occur, pragmatic and sound legislation must be in place to form a foundation that private, public and other government agencies can use as a mandate to prepare our state through mitigation and prevention. Many of those objectives will take longer to be implemented fully. However, the progress made by our government is a tribute to the proactive steps that we are taking to put into effect the recommendations of the inquiry.

This bill also demonstrates that our government is working in collaboration with other levels of government to improve disaster preparedness. This bill will address key issues facing the regulation of dams and water within our state. One of the many factors identified in the report was the need to reform and sharpen the government's procedures and, furthermore, clarify the state's responsibility for flood mitigation in Queensland.

Within my electorate, in areas such as Logan Village, Chambers Flat and Browns Plains, just to name a few, steps to adjust to flood mitigation are being undertaken. That is what this bill does: it paves the way for forward planning to occur and it puts in place measures that aim to prevent devastating events such as the 2010-11 natural disaster. This bill will also see changes made to the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 that will provide the minister with the appropriate authority for flood mitigation manuals and the criteria for approvals. With the presence of referable dams, the commission has also specifically recommended that appropriate legislative measures be in effect to place an obligation on owners to have an effective emergency action plan and, furthermore, have it assessed by a state agency. Flood mitigation

and the strategies used demonstrate the broad spectrum that is directly affected by their impact, which is why the recommendation of the commission stipulates that the minister have final approval for the respective manuals for dam operations. The commission also recommends, and it is thus supported through this bill, that the role for assessing flood mitigation manuals be conducted by an independent individual separate from the developmental process behind the manual. It is also prudent that upon completion of this development the advice of the departmental staff be forwarded to the minister.

By streamlining these recommendations and implementing this legislation, we will see a consistent formalisation of the current process for assessing flood event reports and emergency event reports. Another factor that is a key element that came out of this flood inquiry is the need to move some of the current requirements to legislation in lieu of having them imposed on the individual dams by the regulator. This would create increased transparency and provide the opportunity for community scrutiny.

This bill also sets out to reduce the regulatory burden on the recycled water service providers. As it stands, the framework for low-risk users is being reviewed in direct response to stakeholder concerns about the current process for submitting a recycled water management plan. By reviewing this process, it will eliminate the current onerous provisions that impede any likely savings that could be made with a more standardised approach. This bill speaks to our government's ongoing commitment to reducing bureaucratic red tape. By cutting red tape, we are allowing the providers the ability to deliver their services without having the burden of regulatory measures that are in place. By removing the red tape, we are effectively cutting the service costs for small non-urban service providers and, therefore, easing the cost of living on Queenslanders.

This bill provides the structure for cost-saving measures to be implemented as part of our government's agenda to reduce costs for everyday Queenslanders, with a regulatory limit to be imposed on the prescribed credit amount when it addresses the Solar Bonus Scheme. This is in response to the escalating future costs of the scheme in comparison to the price of rising electricity costs owing to flawed taxes that hurt everyday Queenslanders.

I am proud of the steps that this bill takes to prepare and regulate our state's dams and water resources. I commend the honourable Minister for Energy and Water Supply and his department for their tireless efforts in implementing the recommendations of the QFCI. We cannot predict nature but we can prepare ourselves the best way possible and this bill does that. I therefore commend the bill to the House.