




Speech By  
**Stephen Bennett**

**MEMBER FOR BURNETT**

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Record of Proceedings, 31 October 2013

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (4.50 pm): I rise to support the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. One of this government's primary goals has always been to deliver reforms that would make local governments more effective and free them from red tape. I commend the minister for delivering the first phase of that reform in 2012 and for bringing this bill to the parliament which builds even further on the great progress already made.

The first objective of this bill is to assist the four councils that will come into effect from 1 January 2014 as a result of the deamalgamation process. While none of these councils are in my electorate, I recognise the need for these councils to be able to establish a financial base from their commencement and for transitional arrangements to be put in place for development applications affected by the deamalgamations. This legislation provides for these needs.

Continuing on the issue of deamalgamation, or perhaps even reamalgamation if a group change their minds, not only are these expensive and time-consuming processes but communities need to feel certain of their future and where they fit into the framework of government. Most people just want to get on with things. For that reason I support the provision in this bill for the minister to be the only one who can apply to the Local Government Change Commissioner to have a local government change application assessed.

We want to see mayors and councillors clearly in charge in their own backyards. This bill strengthens that commitment by enabling one person to be both a councillor and a director of a local government corporate entity. The two existing corporations that fit that description, Gladstone Airport Corporation and Wide Bay Water, are situated in local government areas that either border or cross into my electorate of Burnett. These corporations provide services and facilities that are often utilised by my constituents who work in or visit those centres regularly. I support any measure that could potentially improve the ability of the owners of those corporations, the respective councils, to ensure they are managed as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The bill takes a major step towards eliminating the grey areas that exist between levels of government in Queensland's planning and development assessment system. The complexity of the State Planning Policy has already been reduced by making it one broad comprehensive policy rather than the set of narrow issues based policies that it was. By now elevating the SPP so that it prevails over regional plans to the extent of any inconsistency, this effectively provides clear guidance for those involved in planning and development.

I also support the amendments provided in this bill that will allow for the continued operation of existing development control plans in some of the state's fastest growing communities. This is necessary to ensure development can occur easily and that essential infrastructure is provided to support these areas where rapid growth is happening.

Finally, the bill also includes a number of minor and technical amendments to the City of Brisbane Act 2010 and the Local Government Act 2009 which serve to clarify and streamline a

number of processes particularly with regard to complaints about, and the conduct of, serving councillors. Again, I support anything that clarifies issues and allows people to get on with their work more effectively.

In summary, the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 builds on the great work already done by the minister and his team towards reducing red tape for local councils and giving them more ability to look after their own backyards without state government interference. I commend the minister and the committee for the work they have done on this bill.