




Speech By
Hon. Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

BUILDING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (2.38 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In opening, I thank the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee for its prompt consideration of the Building and Other Legislation Bill 2013. In particular, I thank the committee members and chairman, the member for Warrego, for their deliberation and report on the bill. The committee tabled its report on 19 June 2013. I am now pleased to table the government's response to the committee's report.

I would also like to thank those who made submissions on the bill to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee. Submissions were received from the Queensland Master Builders Association, the Housing Industry Association Ltd and the Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority, trading as Seqwater. I greatly appreciate the time and effort taken to communicate their concerns and suggestions. The committee's report made only one recommendation—that the bill be passed. The government accepts that recommendation.

The main purpose of the bill is to cut red tape by streamlining the development application process in Queensland to building over or near sewers, water mains and stormwater drains. There is currently no state-wide standard governing building of this type and the approvals process is confusing, illogical and ad hoc. This is something I committed to addressing. In my address to the parliament when the bill was introduced, I explained the hoops that applicants for a building development approval have to jump through just to be able to build a house or shed on their own property. This kind of regulatory burden is unacceptable.

The Building Act currently does not allow a private building certifier to grant approval for building work over or adjacent to a sewer or water main without the consent of the relevant service provider under the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act. I will refer to this act as the water supply act from now on. The water supply act does not specify any criteria that an applicant must meet in order to obtain the required consent and nor does it detail the process to be followed when making an application. This has led to the development of inconsistent and ad hoc requirements by individual service providers. This lack of consistency is a source of confusion for applicants and building certifiers and can add significant cost and time to building projects. Also, the act does not provide any design standards that would inform potential applicants about the appropriateness of building over or near infrastructure in the first place.

The present requirement to obtain consent from a service provider can also trigger a need to lodge a planning development application with the relevant local government which then must be assessed under the local government's planning scheme or planning policies. Fees vary across

different service providers and local governments, but planning approvals alone can cost up to \$735, and a total cost for all approvals can reach \$2,000 or more just to construct a small shed. This is outrageous and something that this bill intends to correct.

The proposed amendments will facilitate the introduction, under a regulation, of a new mandatory part in the Queensland Development Code, which I will refer to as QDC 1.4. QDC 1.4 has been developed in close consultation with the Department of Energy and Water Supply as well as with local governments, water service providers, building certifiers and the building industry.

In addition, the bill has also been closely scrutinised by the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, which tabled its report on 19 June 2013. In undertaking its deliberations, the committee undertook public hearings and considered submissions from industry. I am pleased to report that this consultation confirmed overwhelming support for these common-sense reforms. For example, Seqwater stated that they welcomed 'the government's objective of reducing red tape through the assessment of impacts on water infrastructure'. The Queensland Master Builders Association submission to the committee concluded—

Overall the new process will deliver great certainty and consistency and these efficiency gains will reduce delays and costs for the building industry.

Likewise, the Housing Industry Association suggested—

Defining once and for all a clear consistent set of clearance requirements based on sound technical principles ... will streamline the design, pricing, approval and construction processes significantly, providing certainty for both the builder and the client.

The committee concluded that it was fully supportive of the new scheme on the basis that it 'will standardise the procedures for building applications thereby saving applicants, the building industry and service providers time and money, while at the same time continuing to ensure underground infrastructure is not damaged, or its maintenance hindered'.

It is worth noting that there was unanimous support from all members of the committee for this proposal. I wish to thank all of the relevant stakeholders once again for their extensive involvement through the consultation process. I understand that final consultation on technical aspects of the new part of the Queensland Development Code are well advanced. The government expects that the new process will be in place and will commence on 1 November 2013. This will provide ample time for industry and water service providers to undertake necessary preparation for the introduction of the code.

The bill continues the government's commitment to reduce red tape and will streamline the design, pricing, approval and construction processes, benefiting both builders and clients. It will be a boost for the construction industry—one of the four pillars of the economy. I table an erratum to the explanatory notes which corrects certain minor editorial errors. I commend the bill to the House.

Tabled paper: Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, erratum to explanatory notes [\[3159\]](#).