




Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2014

QUEENSLAND PLAN BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (12.27 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

It is with a great deal of pride today that I lead the second reading debate on the Queensland Plan Bill 2014, and I thank the Premier for giving me the opportunity to do so. The Queensland Plan Bill 2014 was introduced to this parliament on 26 August 2014, at which time a copy of the first Queensland Plan was tabled by the Premier. Honourable members will recall that at that time the Premier read into the record the bold, ambitious and challenging vision that has been set by Queenslanders. This vision, generated from across all regions of our state and cutting across traditional political boundaries, is one that sets us apart from other states and territories and, as representatives in this House, we are obliged to do all that we can to make the vision of our constituents a reality.

The Newman government has been proud to respond to the community's desire for a long-term approach to state planning that extended beyond electoral cycles. That is why by working with Queenslanders the Queensland Plan was developed. The process that we followed resulted in some 80,000 Queenslanders from all electorates sharing their views and shaping a truly shared long-term vision. I would like to take a few moments to talk about the Queensland Plan and how it sets us apart. We believe that no state or territory in Australian history has undertaken such a comprehensive approach to developing a long-term vision. This is not an exercise that was undertaken lightly, partially or with undue haste. Our government invested in it because the people of Queensland took the time to invest in it too—to shape it and to own it. This included people taking time off work to participate in summits and engagement activities, and investing all of their passion and ingenuity in the process. For this commitment, the government is immensely grateful and it inspires our commitment to deliver on the vision of Queenslanders.

Today we continue on the journey to embed and implement the Queensland Plan as the 'people's plan'. We do this by focusing on a bill that aims to ensure that our state has in place a plan that establishes a long-term vision for the growth and prosperity of Queensland, that reflects the aspirations of the community, business and industry for the future of our state, that puts in place a strong implementation framework that includes state and local governments, and that encourages implementation by the community, business and industry.

I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the fact that the bill before the House does not seek to establish a process to develop a government owned or created plan. On the contrary, it explicitly seeks to take the politics out of the long-term vision itself by providing for the development of

a government response. At this point, it is appropriate to reflect on the participation of all honourable members in the process to develop the Queensland Plan. The process was deliberately bipartisan—government and non-government members were supported to participate; our briefings were open to all members. I acknowledge the contribution that members from across the chamber have made and say that the quality of the plan has been enhanced through our collective effort.

The bill establishes the process to develop a long-term plan and the seven principles against which the plan is to be developed, including that it is long-term; is visionary; has a strategic focus; involves community consultation; is bipartisan; importantly, has measurable outcomes with implementation being a joint responsibility involving state and local government, the community, business and industry. Importantly, the implementation framework that the bill establishes requires action by state and local levels of government respectively, it encourages implementation by the community, business and industry and it establishes an Ambassadors Council to advocate for implementation across the breadth of our state. The implementation framework also recognises the age-old maxim that what gets measured, gets done, and in this context sets a reporting and monitoring framework that culminates in an annual report on progress being made to implement the plan being delivered by the Premier.

The bill was referred to the Finance and Administration Committee, and I would like to thank the committee for its diligence and for the recommendations that it has made. I thank in particular the chair, the member for Capalaba. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those individuals, stakeholders and entities who took the time to make submissions to the committee and for making a contribution toward this important bill. I note that the committee tabled its report on 10 October 2014 and recommended that the bill be passed. I thank the committee for making that recommendation. The committee made a further five recommendations in its report, and I now table the government's response to the recommendations that the committee made.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 51—Queensland Plan Bill 2014, government response [\[6287\]](#).

I am pleased to be able to say that government has noted two of the recommendations made by the committee and either supported or accepted in principle the remaining four recommendations. The government has listened to the committee. I would now like to work through the two committee recommendations that the government has accepted in principle and outline in greater detail the government's response.

Before proceeding, I note that in total the committee received 15 submissions to its inquiry, including from local government, universities, statutory bodies and non-government organisations. It is very encouraging that, of the submissions received, there was a high level of support for the Queensland Plan and for the extensive process that was undertaken to develop it. Indeed, many of the submitters participated in the process to develop the Queensland Plan itself and, given the prominence of their role in the community, will be instrumental in helping to achieve Queenslanders' 30-year vision. In this regard, I also acknowledge the positive comments made by the deputy chair of the committee and member for Mulgrave at the departmental briefing on the bill about his participation in the process to develop the Queensland Plan and his reflection that he thought it was a good process, notwithstanding other reservations that he may have about the bill before the House. Given the effort of the departmental officers and others to drive what was the most comprehensive exercise of its kind ever undertaken in our state's history and our bipartisan approach to developing the plan, I support those remarks and thank the member for Mulgrave for making them.

In recommendation 2, the committee recommends that legislative assurances be provided to ensure there is flexibility in how the core outcomes are to be achieved by authorities such as local governments and universities. The commentary preceding that recommendation focused on clause 8 of the bill relating to the government response to the Queensland Plan. The government has accepted in principle the recommendation made by the committee and is proposing to amend the bill to improve clarity and provide flexibility in terms of the public authorities that the legislation covers. In considering the committee's recommendation, it is noted that local governments are not considered public authorities for the purposes of clause 8 and, as such, are not captured by it. However, to the extent that local governments are covered by the bill, the bill has been deliberately designed to provide flexibility and not be prescriptive on how local governments achieve compliance. I note that the submissions received from local governments were supportive of the flexibility provided by the bill.

With respect to universities, there is no intention that the bill will add regulatory or administrative burden. The government's proposed amendments to the bill will ensure that the bill

applies only to those Public Service offices and statutory bodies that are prescribed as public authorities.

The government has also accepted in principle the committee's recommendation 3, that public authorities whose independence is outlined in other legislation be provided with assurance that the bill does not impede their independence. The government, therefore, proposes to amend the bill to preclude a number of provisions from applying to a public authority to the extent that there would be an impact on the public authority's independence as required by legislation or government policy or as is a customary feature of the public authority.

Despite his previously positive comments, the member for Mulgrave provided a dissenting report to the committee report, and I would like to take some time to respond to that. In his dissenting report, the member for Mulgrave identified concerns about elements of the government's response to the Queensland Plan, and I would like to take this moment to again stress the difference between the Queensland Plan and the government's response to that plan.

The Queensland Plan was developed by 80,000-plus Queenslanders. It is the vision of all Queenslanders for the next 30 years. The government's response is how this, the Newman government, intends to respond and deliver on that vision in the short-, medium- and long-term. Therefore the comments made by the member for Mulgrave in his dissenting report are not relevant to the bill being considered by the House today. The issues raised in the dissenting report around universities and, in particular, public authorities are being dealt with in response to the recommendations made by the committee, as I just outlined. The government has also indicated support for the committee's recommendation to analyse and report on the annual reporting requirement following completion of the first Queensland Plan annual report. However, in terms of the practical action, as outlined by the department at the public briefing, it is the intention of the government to tap into existing reporting mechanisms and use appropriate administrative arrangements to work with local governments to deliver the Queensland Plan annual report.

Lastly, in response to concerns about local government and assuming that the concern relates to the application of principle 7 in schedule 1 of the bill, the government response to the committee's report provides clarity on this issue. As outlined by the department at the public briefing to the committee, there are already examples of local governments looking at the Queensland Plan, including Rockhampton Regional Council and the Whitsunday Regional Council, which has aligned its corporate plan, Whitsunday 2020, with the Queensland Plan.

This government is committed to actively playing our full role in helping the shared vision of Queenslanders to be achieved. Enshrining the requirement for a long-term plan and associated implementation framework in legislation is an important step to achieving Queenslanders' 30-year vision. I commend the bill to the House.