




Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2014

QUEENSLAND PLAN BILL

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (4.55 pm), in reply: It is my honour to rise and conclude the second reading debate of the Queensland Plan Bill 2014. At the outset, I thank all of the government members who have contributed to the debate on this bill this afternoon. In particular, I thank the Premier, who, I must acknowledge at the outset, was the driving force behind engaging with Queenslanders in a way that no state, no territory and no jurisdiction in Australia and possibly the world has ever done before. For his inspirational leadership, we say thank you. I am sure the people of Queensland, particularly the 80,000 Queenslanders who participated in the preparation of the Queensland Plan, say thank you, too.

I thank the members for Nanango, Capalaba, Hinchinbrook, Mansfield, Sunnybank, Murrumba, Townsville and Kallangur for their words of endorsement and their commendation of the process and for standing alongside their delegates and their constituents, all of whom participated in the preparation of this great plan. After all, it is the people's plan. It is Queensland's plan. It is not any party's plan.

That takes me to the contribution by the Leader of the Opposition. I must admit that I am completely gobsmacked, I am amazed and I am appalled.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr POWELL: I take the interjection from the Leader of the House: I am incredibly disappointed that, at the eleventh hour, what has been a wonderful bipartisan approach has fallen to pieces with the politicisation of the Queensland Plan Bill 2014 by the Leader of the Opposition. In essence, what the Leader of the Opposition has done this afternoon is thumbed her nose at Queenslanders. Certainly she has thumbed her nose at the 80,000 Queenslanders who contributed to the Queensland Plan. My question for the Leader of the Opposition is: what does she have against Queenslanders? It is their plan made from their contributions. Why has she thumbed her nose at them?

I cannot say it better than the Premier, who, in his contribution today, quoted Mayor Tony McGrady from Mount Isa. The mayor got it spot-on. For many years Mayor McGrady served in this chamber under the Labor Party. He has agreed to be a Queensland Plan ambassador because he understands what this 30-year vision for the state means. The mayor said—

This is neither an ALP plan, an LNP plan, nor a PUP or a Katter plan—this is a plan for Queensland and one that could have great outcomes.

Well said, Mayor McGrady. I echo his words and thank him for them.

It comes as no surprise that the Leader of the Opposition does not support the government's response to the plan, but the Leader of the Opposition can and should support the voices of Queenslanders who contributed to the plan. She should support those Queenslanders who gave their time, their energy and, more importantly, their know-how to deliver a plan for Queensland that goes above and beyond the electoral cycle. Many members reflected on that today. The process and the outcome of the Queensland Plan have been endorsed and hailed as a success by many individuals

and many groups, including the Queensland Council of Social Service and the Queensland Conservation Council. We have received accolades from international experts who do community engagement day in, day out and who have never seen anything like this. I must admit that many people who have actually read the entire document are blown away by the quality of the commentary that has come through from the many people who had input into it.

I will now return to the Leader of the Opposition's speech earlier today where she rejected the bill on four counts. I would like to examine them a bit more closely. The Leader of the Opposition said that the opposition would be opposing this bill because of advertising. Quite frankly, colleagues, I will not be lectured to on appropriate government advertising by the Leader of the Opposition. This is the same member who, when she was in government, was forced to pay back \$8½ thousand for materials that her own Premier said were inappropriate.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The member is misleading the House and I ask him to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Leader of the Opposition, that is not a point of order. I call the minister.

Mr POWELL: That is typical of the kind of opposition that we have. I again quite happily state that we will not be lectured to and I will not be lectured to by the Leader of the Opposition when it comes to appropriate government advertising. At the end of the day, how do you spell hypocrisy? You spell it A-L-P.

The Leader of the Opposition also claimed that they would be opposing the bill because of the red tape involved. This is responsible legislation to deliver on the expectations of Queenslanders that their vision will be implemented. After all the effort that 80,000 Queenslanders put in to preparing their plan, we, the members of this chamber, the members of this House, owe it to them to ensure that there is an implementation framework that will deliver on their desires and their vision for the next 30 years.

The legislation is designed to not be prescriptive and to reflect the diversity of contributions that will be needed to achieve the vision of Queenslanders. The approach, where possible, taps into existing processes and uses appropriate administrative arrangements. This was supported by local governments and the Local Government Association of Queensland. Amendments in the bill clarify coverage of the bill for public authorities and will assure appropriate application of the bill's requirements.

Let me make it very clear that this bill does not confer any red tape on business or community. The Newman government can be very proud of its very strong track record in red-tape reduction. As the independent Office of Best Practice report on reducing the burden of regulation in Queensland demonstrated, by the end of 2012-13, over 12 months ago, we had already removed more than 9,400 regulatory requirements. I again stress that the time, the energy and the passion that has gone into the preparation of the Queensland Plan by the people of Queensland needs to be reflected in appropriate implementation, and this legislative framework provides that.

The Leader of the Opposition also talked about a lack of compliance. Queenslanders will ultimately make the call about the job that is being done to deliver their vision. The annual progress report will provide a pulse check on how we are going to collectively achieve Queensland's goals and targets.

The state government is already refocusing its activities to implement the Queensland Plan. This includes cabinet now making decisions to deliver on the Queensland Plan objectives. Whilst the bill does not set out penalties for noncompliance, it does situate at the heart of performance management across government a clear requirement for chief executives of prescribed public authorities to ensure policies, programs and services align with the government response and clearly help to deliver on the vision of Queenslanders.

Finally, the Leader of the Opposition said that they would oppose this bill because of concerns around the independence of a number of public authorities. As I said in my second reading speech, the Finance and Administration Committee report recommendation No.3 sought legislative assurances for statutory officers and other organisations that the bill does not impede their independence. The government has listened to the submissions and the recommendation made by the committee and by a number of statutory officers and will amend the bill to provide that assurance about independence.

I come back to one key point. There is a very clear distinction between the vision of Queenslanders, as expressed through the Queensland Plan, and how the government of the day responds to that plan. The Queensland Plan sets out where we want to get to. The government

response is about how we get there. Each government of the day will determine the best way to play its role in making this happen. Again, it would be quite acceptable for the opposition to oppose the government's response, but to oppose the Queensland Plan and this legislation in its entirety is thumbing their noses at the people of Queensland—the mums and dads of Queensland. I again ask: what have they got against Queenslanders?

Before I conclude, I want to thank the Glass House delegates who attended the activities throughout the preparation of the Queensland Plan—Howard, Ursula, Ruby and Riley. I thank also the Glass House gang that sat behind them and also participated in many activities during the preparation of the plan.

I also want to thank the many government officers who have contributed to the plan, who have been involved in all of the events and who spent many hours sifting through the reports and submissions made by 80,000 Queenslanders. Can I particularly acknowledge Matthew Byrnes, Jamie Merrick, Natasha Neale, Grant Stidiford, Gary Ward and Anne Moffatt and those in the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel.

Every journey begins with a single step, and 80,000 Queenslanders have started along this journey with us. It is in the best interests of all Queenslanders now and into the future that the Queensland Plan Bill be passed. I commend the bill to the House.