




Speech By  
**Hon. David Crisafulli**

**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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## **SUSTAINABLE PLANNING (INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (5.34 pm): I know my colleague the member for Townsville will be very interested in what I have to say here, hence the reason he was having a brief discussion with me. I rise in support of the Sustainable Planning (Infrastructure Charges) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is something I am particularly pleased to see debated here today. I want to start by painting a history of infrastructure charges. It started as something called PIPs. As someone who was involved in the local government sector at the time, boy oh boy do I know all about PIPs! It was an absolute shambolic attempt to try to find a way of funding infrastructure.

Like most things that we saw implemented by the former government, it was big on ideas and small on planning. The way it was rolled out was absolutely farcical. Councils had to live through it. The building industry had to live through it. Mums and dads had to live through it. Quite frankly, something needed to be done. This bill does that. I acknowledge that all sectors in this debate will find parts of the bill rewarding and will find parts of it challenging, but everyone will acknowledge that it is another example of cleaning up a mess.

What it does is finally give certainty to all involved to move on with life. There is certainty for local governments to be able to plan knowing their revenue that is coming in. There is certainty for builders to know that there is a job at the end of the tunnel. There is certainty for the construction industry to be able to adjust the price that they pay when purchasing land in order to factor in infrastructure charges. Today, in my mind, this bill is only one part of the debate. There is another portion of the debate, and that is the type of infrastructure that we are building. In my mind, what we are doing today is working out a fair assessment of who pays what when, and that is needed, but there is another debate that needs to occur in this state and that is the kind of infrastructure that is needed, the standards that are required, and how and when we deliver that infrastructure. Until we have that right, we will never have a property sector, in my mind, that has fully embraced the opportunity that comes in a state that has a government with an attitude to do things. This bill takes a huge step in that direction, though.

What I particularly like is the fact that those councils who seek to join us on the path towards getting the economy going will be rewarded. That is fair and is proper. The balance that the Deputy Premier has struck, in my mind, is an excellent one. There is an ability for councils who feel that they need the safety net of the higher cap to take it. There is also the opportunity for those councils who say, 'We believe we can incentivise developments in certain areas. We believe we can get our hands on some of the infrastructure money that has been put on the table, and we believe it is worth our while to go for it at 100 miles an hour and make this happen.'

I wish to say one more thing on the issue of infrastructure before I speak to the amendment, which is why I am rising to speak today. At the heart of this issue is a fact that has been lost on

everybody when we have discussed infrastructure charges over the last half a decade, and that is that no matter how you cut it up, no matter how you look at it, in the end it is the same person who pays. One level of government calls them ratepayers. One level of government calls them taxpayers. The builder calls them a client, but they call themselves everyday people—mums, dads, retirees, first home owners, single people. They are all the same person. No matter how you address this and no matter how you cut it up, unless you have a system where the economy is doing well, unless you have a system where the standard of infrastructure is delivered at a level that suits everybody, it is always the same person who has to pay.

I seek to speak to the amendment that the Deputy Premier will put forward. I do so with a great degree of thanks because it is something that absolutely needs to be done. I refer to the Supreme Court ruling. It has far more implications than just for the Mackay Regional Council. That is why it is absolutely essential that we move swiftly on this matter. In effect, it has implications for around 20 councils across the state. I have correspondence from both the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Brisbane City Council, which I will table, but in it the respective organisations talk about a potential liability if this is not mopped up. In the case of local governments, it is about \$2.3 billion. In the case of Brisbane City Council, it is about \$1.1 billion. I table that correspondence.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 27 May 2014, from the Office of the Lord Mayor, Mr Graham Quirk, to the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience, Hon. David Crisafulli MP, regarding the categorisation of land for differential general rates [\[5326\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 28 May 2014, from the Local Government Association of Queensland, Mr Greg Hallam to the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience, Hon. David Crisafulli MP, regarding the categorisation of land for differential general rates [\[5327\]](#).

There is a long history with councils having different rates for owner occupied properties versus investor's properties. In fact, I believe the first council in the state to do it was the Brisbane City Council under Jim Soorley. I say to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that it is not for me to say whether or not that is good policy; it is my role to try to stop what could be a massive burden for ratepayers in dealing with the past and to be able to give local governments the flexibility to be able to rate the way they see fit. In doing so, they can then be judged for their own actions. As a parliament, we should do all we can to enable local decision makers to make local decisions.

In closing, can I say that I believe that the bill is an excellent step forward in what has been a very, very long issue, in what has been a real noose around the neck of getting the economy of Queensland going. I say with all of my interest as somebody who loves regional Queensland, who loves councils and who loves the economy that this is a great shot in the arm for Queensland.