




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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**COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION (FUNDING RED TAPE REDUCTION)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (3.03 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, may I apologise for my indiscretion with my phone just before.

Mr Elmes: Is it off?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is off. I rise to support the Community Legislation (Funding Red Tape Reduction) Amendment Bill 2014. I get so many wonderful opportunities to stand up in this House and acknowledge the work of our hardworking ministry—in this particular case the Minister for Communities—in their efforts to reduce red tape for the state of Queensland, to help every single Queenslanders have more money in their back pocket and to allow us to do things that we need to do, and that is to improve the state of Queensland. In this case it is to put more money back in the hands of our wonderful service providers. I know that this minister has been working extremely hard to achieve this exact goal, to streamline the processes to make it easier. I know that the minister has been working on this piece of legislation for a good couple of years. It is something that is just so necessary yet in a way so simple, because what we are doing is combining those three acts into one in an effort to assist these community organisations to provide the services that they provide and to get on with doing what they do best.

Whether it is providing family support or disability services for vulnerable and disadvantaged people, the tireless efforts and invaluable contribution of these organisations do not go unnoticed and should be supported wherever possible. That is why over these past couple of years, as I have just touched on, significant efforts have been made to streamline the requirements imposed on our not-for-profit and non-government organisations to enable these groups more time to focus on delivering front-line services that make a real difference in people's lives. This is extremely necessary after 20 years of mismanagement by the previous Labor government and Labor's \$80 billion worth of debt. Labor's bungling and inefficiencies pushed the cost of providing services in Queensland to the highest in the nation.

Our government has already introduced a suite of reforms that substantially simplify quality standards, monitoring and reporting requirements, funding approvals and acquittal processes for grants. Other social services reforms include a procurement framework, social services investment portal and building public sector capability—all while aiming to develop a stronger and more sustainable community sector and improving value for money in government investment in social services.

The communities legislation amendment bill will build on these efforts by further simplifying the existing laws governing the funding of community organisations by removing unnecessary requirements and duplication for these community organisations. The reforms also reduce the prescriptive nature of requirements that do not need to be legislated but can be dealt with more effectively and efficiently through administrative arrangements. So often I get the opportunity to stand

in this House and congratulate our government for common-sense reforms. What I have just read out are common-sense reforms.

Most excitingly, this bill will cut red-tape costs for funded organisations by almost \$2.6 million per year and remove more than 60 pages from the Queensland statute book as the bill amends and reduces the Community Services Act 2007 and the Disability Services Act 2006 and repeals the Family Services Act 1987. This is a great outcome that will allow community organisations to focus more of their time and resources on front-line products and services rather than on meeting the compliance requirements of several different, duplicated and inconsistent acts.

I know the minister has come out to the great electorate of Nanango on numerous occasions and visited many of our community organisations. I was thinking about one of the organisations and providers out there ably run Nina Temperton, and that is South Burnett CTC. This community organisation would have in the past applied for grants under all of those acts. Now, thanks to this wonderful red-tape reduction legislation, they need only apply under one act. So it is common sense to note the benefits that would flow: they obviously would have the same terms and conditions and the same reporting requirements. These things seem quite simple but in practice it is the common sense that we are looking for, because all the different acts had different requirements for these organisations. These organisations predominantly employ people to provide services and they are not always in tune with the administrative requirements or, if they are, they would much prefer to be spending their highly valued time on providing services.

The contrast could not be clearer. Under the former Labor government, there were three different acts to provide funding to community organisations. Under our LNP government these organisations will now be able to use a single application for funding, thereby removing duplication and unnecessary compliance requirements.

This bill expands the range of organisations eligible to apply for funding to give departments greater choice and flexibility about the types of organisations that they fund to deliver services. At the same time the bill will help provide strong safeguards for the effective and continued delivery of these essential community services. These safeguards include ensuring the government has clear legal powers to safeguard the large investment of public funds in the non-government sector and to protect the people who use publicly funded products and services.

Our government's disciplined plan to cut red tape and reduce the cost of business will no doubt have a positive and lasting impact on the social services sector. This bill is another winning knock for the government in the ongoing fight to slash red tape by 20 per cent. This is a fight we will win, and I support the bill before the House.