



Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (7.35 pm): I might bring a bit of relevance back to the debate tonight by talking about infrastructure charges and the bilateral agreement. I rise to add my support to the Sustainable Planning (Infrastructure Charges) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. In the Deputy Premier's first reading speech, he said—

This bill delivers on the government's commitment to reform Queensland's local infrastructure planning and charging framework and makes essential amendments to the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971.

After extensive consultation with local governments, water distributor-retailers and the development industry, we know that this bill does exactly that. As the House has heard, this bill provides for the establishment of a long-term local infrastructure planning and charging framework in Queensland that supports the mentioned consulted stakeholders. As members in this place would be aware, in Queensland local authorities are responsible for the provision of local infrastructure networks, including things such as roads, water, wastewater, stormwater, parks and land for community groups. Local governments currently levy infrastructure charges and impose infrastructure conditions on new developments to contribute to the cost of providing that infrastructure.

This bill and, in particular, the infrastructure charges review is a key part of this government's planning reform agenda to build a resilient and competitive Queensland economy. We would all like to see that, wouldn't we? There are four major policy objectives of the bill: to establish a long-term local infrastructure planning and charging framework that is certain, consistent and transparent and that supports local authority, sustainability and development feasibility in Queensland; to simplify, streamline and clarify the operations, as well as supporting the appeal and dispute resolution process for charges within the SPA; to remove superseded and redundant provisions of the SPA, which is yet another red-tape reduction measure in this government's agenda; and to align the distributor-retailer infrastructure charging and planning arrangements under the SEQ water act of 2009 with a local government framework under SPA. The four main policy objectives are ultimately achieved through a number of key elements: a process for converting non-trunk infrastructure to trunk infrastructure; infrastructure planning by local councils; improving the clarity of conditions, offsets and refunds; charges limitation; appeals and dispute resolution; state infrastructure provider conditions; and infrastructure agreements.

With regard to the part of the bill that covers the environmental approvals bilateral agreement, it is important to understand that the proposed amendments in the bill are necessary to give effect to the memorandum of understanding signed by both the Queensland and Australian governments on 18 October 2013. This memo of understanding strengthens intergovernmental cooperation on environmental assessments and approvals, and ensures that by September 2014 a comprehensive bilateral agreement will be in place.

The aforementioned amendments have not fallen from the sky; as I said, they have been discussed for quite a while. As everybody in this place is well aware, the Newman LNP government is

focused on consultation and ensuring that the decisions made in this place are well informed and form part of a strong plan to get this state back on track.

For this particular bill a discussion paper—the infrastructure planning and charging framework review—was available for public consultation from 1 July until 9 August 2013. In total 85 submissions were received from local authorities, the development industry, peak bodies as well as other interested stakeholders. As well as the discussion paper, between February last year and April this year the department undertook 13 workshops with key stakeholders to discuss issues and options for reform. This consultation informed the committee and provided for a methodical way of refinement for preferred reform options.

Unlike the member for Nicklin, I actually think that the committee system in this place is working very well. We had quite a robust and intense discussion on a lot of the issues contained in this bill over the course of the committee's inquiry into the bill. That informed the committee in terms of the recommendations that we put forward to government and also some of the points for clarification.

We heard from the Deputy Premier today that, in terms of the government's response, a lot of those recommendations were accepted by the government. Quite a few of the points of clarification turned from points of clarification into amendments that will be moved later tonight. The system is working very well. I commend the committee system to members here. I thank the minister for bringing this forward in the manner that he has.

Queensland is a great state with great opportunity. Only the Newman government has a strong plan to ensure it remains that way. I thank the Deputy Premier and my committee colleagues for their work. I unquestionably commend this bill to the House.