




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.59 pm): I rise today to speak on the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015. The City of Brisbane Act 2010 and the Local Government Act 2009 prohibit a local government from publishing or distributing election material during a caretaker period for a local government election. Under the Local Government Electoral Act, the Electoral Commission accepts how-to-vote cards if satisfied the cards are unlikely to mislead or deceive an elector in voting.

The Local Government Electoral Act 2011, LGEA, requires accepted how-to-vote cards to be available for public inspection at the place of nomination or on the Electoral Commission's website. The bill aims to correct the inconsistency with the LGEA by permitting accepted how-to-vote cards to be available for inspection during the caretaker period for a local government election. The bill goes further by making a minor amendment to the LGEA to repeal an obsolete reference to mayoral first-past-the-post voting as a consequence of the change made on 1 January 2015, which in effect changed the voting system to optional preferential voting.

The Sustainable Planning Act 2009 required local government to levy an infrastructure charge to include a local government infrastructure plan, an LGIP, in its planning scheme by 30 June 2016. Many local governments have advised that they will not be in a position to prepare the LGIP by that date and so would not be able to impose charges on a development approval after that date. This would result in delaying approval development applications that would have otherwise attracted significant charges. The good thing about this particular bill is that it provides two further years to have an LGIP in place.

I turn to the amendments in relation to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009. The information in the infrastructure charges notice, the ICN, provides water connection applicants with greater clarity and certainty around offsets and refunds for trunk infrastructure they may be able to provide. However, a large development may face significant delays in receiving connection approval and an ICN due to an offset or refund being of a magnitude that it requires specific budget approval with the distributor-retailer. The policy objective in relation to the SEQ water act is to allow applicants for a connection approval the ability to advise the distributor-retailer that the applicant is not seeking information about an offset or refund in an infrastructure charges notice.

We have spoken about infrastructure and the need for infrastructure. In Townsville, as the member for Townsville articulated quite well, we have a priority development area and a state development area and a number of other major infrastructure plans in place. We do not want to see unnecessary delays with the approval process.

This bill is about our government consulting and listening to local councils. With this bill our government is providing a clear way forward for local government to get on with the job of planning and the provision of infrastructure in our great state. I commend the bill to the House.