




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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**QUEEN'S WHARF BRISBANE BILL; BRISBANE CASINO AGREEMENT
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (8.11 pm): I rise this evening to talk about the two bills that give effect to the Queen's Wharf development in the CBD of Brisbane. The member for Burleigh talked about foresight. I think it is quite interesting that we are here tonight talking about a development in a priority development area that is proposed and overseen by Economic Development Queensland, an organisation that was established by the former Labor government. Former premier Bligh established the Urban Land Development Authority that has, through various iterations, become Economic Development Queensland. We are talking this evening about a development that is proposed and will go through the process of that same agency. When the member for Burleigh talks about foresight, it was the foresight of the former Labor government that actually created the agency that is overseeing this development.

I would like to start by thanking the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. It is a pleasure to be a member of that committee, especially when we get to discuss, debate and hear about projects across the state and bills and legislation that will have impacts in terms of planning. Planning is my passion and the sector in which I have experience. I would also like to thank the staff from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, the Department of State Development and the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning who answered our at times very lengthy and detailed questions.

These two bills are both mechanisms to facilitate the delivery of the Queen's Wharf Brisbane project. I have to agree with both the member for Burleigh and the member for Mirani that the project will activate the southern part of the Brisbane CBD. It will create jobs and tourism and a buzz around Brisbane. I live in Central Queensland now, but when I was a student studying at QUT I would often walk around this southern part of the Brisbane CBD.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mrs LAUGA: I certainly thought that it needed activation and this project will do that. I think it will be great for Brisbane. The Queen's Wharf Brisbane Bill aims to facilitate the development of the precinct by excluding the application of certain property and planning legislative provisions, provide a process to ratify the proposed casino agreement and maintain the integrity of casino operations. The Brisbane Casino Agreement Amendment Bill is a bill that proposes to amend the act to replace the current Brisbane Casino Agreement with a replacement agreement so that the current operation can continue and so to cater for the redevelopment of the Queen's Wharf site. They are essentially two bills that will pave the way and be a mechanism for the Queen's Wharf development in the CBD of Brisbane.

There were a couple of issues that were identified through the committee inquiry process. They related mostly around the integrity of casino operations, around heritage, around the rationale for declaring the Queen's Wharf site a PDA-associated development and also there were a few concerns

raised by councils about the scope of the PDA-associated development. It was interesting to hear from the department about the process in which casino operators are determined to have the integrity to operate casinos. The department provided some information about the criteria that is used for suitability in terms of an applicant's personal history, their criminal history, their background, their business acumen, their ability and previous history of being involved in a casino, their financial background and financial position and also how they are going to fund the development. They are all criteria which the department investigates in terms of suitability of casino operators. The department also specified that it would look at not only the applicant but also the people around them, the applicant's friends and family. There is certainly a very strict process for determining the integrity and suitability of applicants. That is as it should be, might I add, because operating a casino is a very serious business. It is good to see that the department does take it very seriously and that there are very strict rules around the suitability of casino operators.

In terms of heritage protection, concerns were raised by a number of members of the committee around preserving iconic landmarks and heritage buildings in the CBD around which the Queen's Wharf development will be developed. We were assured by the various departments that iconic landmarks will continue to be protected and that heritage management plans are in place and that heritage places are subject to special care and attention in considering proposals for variation work. Many people with an interest in Brisbane CBD heritage can rest assured knowing that these bills will still protect the heritage in this part of the CBD.

In terms of the rationale for declaring the Queen's Wharf site a PDA-associated development—PDA meaning priority development area—the PDA-associated development provisions arrive from the proposed inclusion in the Queen's Wharf development of a bridge over the Brisbane River from the development to the South Bank Parklands. I think that that bridge will really help with connectivity between the South Bank Parklands, the CBD and the Queen's Wharf site. It is an important element of the project in terms of connectivity. We know from the department's briefing that the proposed bridge has a series of very complex layers of assessment involving a variety of authorities. The provisions to streamline the assessment process into a single assessment layer under the priority development area process will make it a lot easier to facilitate that bridge as part of the development.

Certain councils did raise concerns about the scope of a PDA-associated development. The Queen's Wharf Brisbane Bill allows for PDA-associated development. There was a submission made by the Brisbane City Council and also by the Local Government Association of Queensland. I raised those concerns in the committee's hearing and Economic Development Queensland advised that the proposed PDA-associated development is reflecting what the existing PDA scenario is; it is allowing for other development that might be associated with the PDA and streamlining that process. I feel that the concerns raised by the submitters were adequately addressed by Economic Development Queensland.

That summarises the concerns and issues raised through the committee process. Regardless of those concerns, the committee voted unanimously, I believe on both occasions, to support the bill. I commend the bills to the House.