




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 19 April 2016

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

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (8.19 pm): I rise to speak on the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Bill 2015 and the Brisbane Casino Agreement Amendment Bill 2016. I support the passage of both bills as they bring into effect the Queen's Wharf Brisbane development, which commenced under the LNP in 2013. These bills are about growing the economy and providing jobs for Queenslanders, and not only here in Brisbane. From the construction, flow-on effects will be felt across the whole state, stretching into my region of Western Queensland and the seat of Gregory. I will speak about that later. The Queen's Wharf project will provide between 2,000 and 3,000 construction jobs and 8,000 ongoing jobs for Queenslanders. Those jobs are desperately needed. This is the only major project on the drawing board and it is needed to boost the economy of the Brisbane CBD. Let us remember that without the 1 William Street development, which those opposite continue to criticise, and the relocation of the government precinct, the Queen's Wharf redevelopment will not happen.

This debate provides me with an opportunity to pay tribute to and acknowledge the member for Callide and former deputy premier, who I know spent hours, weeks and months working on this project, bringing together people and departments and making sure that it happened. He will look back at this project as a legacy that he can be very proud of. As Queenslanders, we should all be very proud of this project. He started the economic development and renewal of the George Street government precinct within the CBD, which is something that we will all benefit from for not only years to come but also decades to come. This is a significant project and he has played a significant role in putting it together. As I said, it is something that he should be very proud of. Certainly we are proud of the project that he has spent a lot of time on. It should be acknowledged that the former deputy premier, Jeff Seeney, played a significant role in making this happen. The former treasurer, the member Clayfield, also played a critical role. I pay tribute to the former treasurer and member for Clayfield, Tim Nicholls, who played a significant role in putting together this project, along with the former deputy premier and member for Callide, Jeff Seeney.

Previously, Labor said that they oppose 1 William Street, but they have embraced the Queen's Wharf development with open arms. The government cannot have it both ways. Are they trying to walk both sides of the street on this issue? One project does not happen without the other. Of course, the LNP supports the bills and this process, because we instigated them. It was the LNP plan to redevelop and rejuvenate a tired end of the Brisbane CBD.

Turning to the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Bill, as part of the arrangements made between the state and Destination Brisbane Consortium, which included Echo Entertainment, a casino licence was offered. One of the main purposes of the bill is to ratify the QWB Casino Agreement, which is required by the Casino Control Act 1982 before a casino licence can be granted. The proposed agreement deals with a broad range of matters, including the area within the QWB development where the casino will be

located, the grant of a casino licence and the condition of terms and grants. It provides an exclusivity clause for the Queen's Wharf casino by providing that the state will not authorise or grant a new casino licence or otherwise permit gambling within 60 kilometres of the GPO for a specific time, with some exceptions. The proposed agreement also deals with other matters that include casino tax, GST, inspections, facilities for gaming regulators and police, and a range of reporting and other obligations, termination of the agreement, finance, confidentiality and probity arrangements, including preventing certain people from involvement in the consortium.

This was all done under the previous LNP government. This is the level of detail that the former deputy premier and the former treasurer went into to put together a landmark consortium project that will be an economic generator for the Brisbane CBD, which we desperately need. As I said, this project will provide 3,000 jobs in construction and 8,000 ongoing jobs. It is a significant project that we should be proud of. Again, I commend the former deputy premier, the former treasurer and the LNP for putting together this project.

The department advised that the proposed agreement had been negotiated during discussions with Destination Brisbane Consortium. The final QWB Casino Agreement must be ratified by the parliament for it to come into effect. I note that four local councils—the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Logan and Bundaberg—and the Local Government Association raised concerns about the extension of ministerial powers through the declaration of the PDA-associated development, which may have unintended consequences for planning large-scale developments in the future. The CCIQ and the Tourism Industry Council supported the amendments to the Economic Development Act around PDAs. On balance, the committee, of which I am a part, considered that the PDA-associated development is a reasonable policy response to the need to have a streamlined planning approval process. The committee suggested further clarification for a defined criteria of the declaration of PDA-associated developments.

The department clarified that the amendments do not change existing trading hours or lockout exemptions for casinos. As we know, there is one set of rules for this precinct and another set of rules for the rest of Queensland.

The Brisbane casino, known locally as the Treasury Casino, is located in the heart of Brisbane. Importantly, it is the custodian of the state owned Treasury and Land Administration buildings. The casino opened in 1985 and includes a five-star heritage hotel, six restaurants, five bars and a casino. The bill proposes to amend the act to replace the current BCA with a replacement BCA to amend the casino hotel site. Also there will be a heritage management plan agreed to between the developer and the government regarding the Treasury building, the Land Administration building, the Queen's Park and the former library, which is very important.

Not only will this project have an economic impact on Brisbane and the south-east but also it will help drive overseas tourism right across the state, including in my seat of Gregory, which is at the heart of outback tourism. We rely heavily on the grey nomads and families who start travelling as the west cools down for the winter. However, we need to attract the growing and emerging Chinese and South-East Asian market. The Chinese tourism market is attracted to Queensland. We offer the ideal holiday and a unique experience for a Chinese middle-class that is growing extremely fast. The other day, I found these very interesting figures: in 2009, the middle-class population for the Asia-Pacific region, which includes China, was 525 million people or 28 per cent of the middle-class population of the world. By 2020, it is expected that the middle-class population of South-East Asia will be 1.74 billion people or 54 per cent of the middle-class population of the world. By 2030, which is not that far away, it is predicted that the middle-class population of South-East Asia will be 3.2 billion people or 66 per cent of the world's middle-class population.

Therefore, into the future more Chinese will be able to afford a trip to Queensland and we need to make sure that we have the right infrastructure, including world-class six-star accommodation and casinos, to cater for them. This will have an impact on my seat of Gregory and the outback tourism market if we take advantage of what is happening here in Brisbane. When people visit Brisbane or Cairns, we want to encourage them to also have an authentic outback experience. When people see the Brisbane project they will say, 'This is something that I want to see. I enjoy six-star accommodation and I would like the casino. I can also jump on a plane and spend a couple of days in the outback.' That will have a huge impact on the outback tourism industry.

As this House knows, Gregory is home to the premier tourist destinations in the state: the Stockman's Hall of Fame, the Qantas Museum, the Tree of Knowledge, the Diamantina, Barcoo and Thomson rivers and a fantastic outback experience. We can attract the visitors to the Brisbane project. We can tap into that market by offering those people a true outback experience in Western Queensland and dollars will flow into our community.

Mr Costigan: Much needed, too.

Mr MILLAR: Absolutely. I take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday; it is much needed. This is why I think that the project is fantastic. Again, I congratulate the former deputy premier and the former treasurer for the project, because not only does it have an impact on the Brisbane CBD as it will rejuvenate a tired end of town but also it will have an impact on my seat of Gregory and towns such as Longreach, Yaraka, Ilfracombe, Isisford, Quilpie and Eromanga, because people will travel to Brisbane and then travel to the outback, which means dollars for communities right around the state.

With the House's indulgence for a minute can I call on everybody in this House and their family and friends who are looking to take a holiday this year to come to the outback. If members know anybody who is having a holiday, whether it is their family, their friends or a constituent, tell them to spend some time in the outback because, as members know, we are going through a drought at the moment. It has had a major impact on our local economy. The best way to help us is to come out and spend money in our accommodation places, in our restaurants and at our tourist attractions. People can play a part in trying to keep the communities in the outback alive by spending dollars there if they are going on a holiday.

One dollar spent in the outback in our tourism industry goes around seven times in our local community. That helps our butcher, our baker, our newsagent. It helps everybody out there. If members could implore people to come to the outback to spend their dollars as we go into the cooler months, I would really appreciate it.