




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

Record of Proceedings, 13 September 2016

WATER (LOCAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (3.24 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Water Act 2000 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Transportation and Utilities Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016 [[1494](#)].

Tabled paper: Water (Local Management Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [[1495](#)].

This bill establishes a transfer scheme to allow the government to implement local management arrangements for SunWater's channel irrigation schemes. SunWater, a government owned corporation, owns and operates eight channel irrigation schemes across Queensland. Local management arrangements involve the potential transfer of these schemes to local grower control. Transfer of ownership of the scheme will put the responsibility for the ongoing management of the schemes on the primary beneficiaries of the irrigation schemes—the irrigation customers. Those people who know the most about their water supply are the locals and local management is designed to use local knowledge to reduce costs, increase productivity of the irrigation scheme and add value to our agricultural sector. The introduction of local management arrangements will empower local communities and encourage the growth of Queensland's agricultural industry.

The bill inserts a new chapter 4A into the Water Act 2000. The bill applies to the Eton, Emerald, St George and Theodore channel irrigation schemes, which are ready to commence the transition to local management subject to there being agreement on the final terms of the transfer and there being sufficient support from the local irrigation community. The bill allows for regulations to be made for the four remaining channel schemes, namely, Bundaberg, Burdekin, Lower Mary and Mareeba, to be subject to the transfer scheme in the future. Those schemes are not yet ready to commence the transition and will need to prepare revised business proposals for consideration by the government and the local community will need to be consulted to ensure there is sufficient support.

The key objective of the bill is to facilitate and give effect to the transfer of the business, assets and liabilities associated with and related to each irrigation scheme from SunWater to new legal entities, which will be owned and controlled by the irrigation customers in each scheme. The bill applies to irrigation infrastructure such as channels, pipes, pump stations and other infrastructure, plant and equipment necessary to operate the irrigation scheme. The bill does not apply to bulk water infrastructure such as dams; however, some weirs which are integral parts of operating the scheme will be covered by the bill. The transfer scheme will allow for notices to be published in the *Government Gazette*, allowing for the transfer of the business, employees, assets, liabilities, interests in land and the issuing of licenses and authorisations necessary to implement the scheme.

A key issue for the transfer is to ensure that the new entities have appropriate land tenure for the scheme. In order to provide the necessary land tenure the bill allows for the transfer of freehold land and the issue of new perpetual leases for the channel infrastructure, ensuring that the schemes have appropriate tenure to operate the schemes while preserving any existing resource authorities. A range of provisions will ensure that the transfer of the schemes does not impact on the ongoing operations of the channels, which provide an essential service to the irrigation customers in each scheme.

A number of other provisions will facilitate the completion of the project, including a power to issue directions to support the project, as well as providing for the ability to ensure that the irrigators can carry out appropriate due diligence by ensuring access to confidential information in particular circumstances. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. MC BAILEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (3.27 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Transportation and Utilities Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transportation and Utilities Committee.