




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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QUEENS'S WHARF BRISBANE BILL; BRISBANE CASINO AGREEMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (5.30 pm): I move—

That the bills be now read a second time.

I rise to speak to the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Bill 2015 and the Brisbane Casino Agreement Amendment Bill 2016. These bills are important for Queensland as they provide the necessary legislative framework to support the implementation of the \$3 billion Queen's Wharf project, an iconic world-class tourism facility that will reinvigorate the heart of our capital city. This project will transform the Queen's Wharf area into a vibrant new-world city development unlike any other offered in our state that will attract visitors and investment to Queensland. Its design will celebrate our city's unique heritage and deliver high-quality public spaces for public events and everyday use from the city's centre to the river's edge. Already, the bulk of preliminary site investigations are being undertaken by local firms and early works, including a \$30 million Riverside Expressway refurbishment, are underway.

I will speak first to the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Bill, which is the primary bill that supports the implementation of the Queen's Wharf project. One of the main purposes of this bill is to ratify a casino agreement between the state and the Destination Brisbane Consortium, which will establish the terms and conditions for the operation of the Queen's Wharf casino. These terms include the area within which the casino will be located, the calculation of the casino tax, reporting and other obligations of relevant entities and matters relating to the grant of a casino licence and a liquor licence in relation to the casino. Under the Casino Control Act 1982, a casino agreement must be ratified by the parliament to have any force or effect. Ratification of the casino agreement not only provides the consortium with a higher level of certainty, given their significant investment to the project, but also ensures that the state can enforce obligations on the consortium provided for in the casino agreement.

The bill also clarifies that a provision of the Queen's Wharf Brisbane act, including a provision of the casino agreement, prevails over any other act to the extent of any inconsistency. The schedule to the bill currently provides for a proposed agreement, which is taken to be ratified by the Legislative Assembly once approved by regulation. This approach was taken as at the time of its introduction the casino agreement had not yet been executed. The casino agreement has now been executed and I will be moving amendments during the consideration in detail stage of the bill to replace the proposed casino agreement with the executed casino agreement for parliament's ratification. The executed form of the casino agreement is the same in all material respects as the proposed casino agreement, excluding a limited number of minor formatting changes.

The casino agreement is a prerequisite for the granting of a casino licence, which has been offered by the state to the consortium in recognition of its significant investment in the project. This casino licence will be subject to an initial geographic exclusivity of 60 kilometres from the Brisbane GPO for the first 25 years, for which the consortium will pay a total exclusivity fee of \$145.5 million to the state, in addition to quarterly licence fees of approximately \$230,000.

In regard to the grant of a liquor licence, the application will not be decided until the Queen's Wharf integrated resort is closer to completion and is a matter for the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming. The liquor licence will be issued on a similar basis as the existing Brisbane casino and hotel and will apply only to a limited area within the precinct rather than the entire precinct. The bill also provides for more detailed and far-reaching regulatory controls on entities or persons associated or connected with the ownership, management or operation of the Queen's Wharf casino than previous casino agreement acts.

These provisions recognise the more complex corporate and operational structures surrounding the ownership and management of the Queen's Wharf casino and will help to futureproof against changes in these structures. Unlike previous agreement acts, these regulatory provisions have also been provided for in the body of the act rather than just in the casino agreement itself to allow their application to relevant persons who are not parties to the casino agreement. These provisions will help ensure that the management and operation of the casino remain free from criminal influence and that the good reputation of casino gaming in Queensland is maintained.

The bill makes a number of amendments to the Casino Control Act 1982 to modify the existing provisions to align with the terms of the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Casino Agreement and address other matters negotiated between the state and the consortium. For example, the bill allows a casino licence to be granted to a person who has entered into an agreement to lease land for the proposed casino-hotel complex, but has not yet been granted this lease. It also allows a casino licence to be issued on conditions, such as preconditions for the conduct of gaming, which is important in the case of the Queen's Wharf Brisbane casino, as it is not expected to be operational until 2022.

The bill allows casino operators to extend credit for gaming to non-Queensland resident junket participants and to make deposits into player accounts by credit card. These concessions are important as they will allow our casinos to be competitive with similar concessions that are already offered in other Australian jurisdictions.

The bill also excludes the application of certain property and planning legislative provisions that are not intended to apply to large-scale developments and provides exemptions to various legislation such as the Retail Shop Leases Act 1994 so that the commercial outcomes negotiated between the state and the consortium can be achieved. These amendments will streamline the leasing of land under the Land Act 1994 to the state and the consortium, promote the activation of the precinct around the water's edge and ensure that requirements placed on the consortium by the state are met, such as the establishment of public thoroughfares through the precinct to enhance public accessibility.

The bill also amends the Economic Development Act 2012 to establish a process for the Minister for Economic Development Queensland to determine certain development outside a priority development area to be PDA-associated development. Specifically, these provisions have been designed to provide for the development of a pedestrian bridge over the Brisbane River from Queen's Wharf to South Bank Parklands. As the bridge will partially only fall within the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Priority Development Area, the development application process for the bridge would require approval from both the Minister for Economic Development Queensland for the portion within the priority development area, and the Brisbane City Council, exercising its assessment powers under the South Bank Corporation Act 1989 for the assessment of a portion over the river and the land in the South Bank Corporation area.

In order to simplify development applications across multiple planning jurisdictions, the bill provides for the Minister for Economic Development Queensland to approve and condition the portion of the bridge outside the priority development area as PDA-associated development. I note that the scope of what may be captured as a PDA-associated development was raised by a number of local governments and the Local Government Association of Queensland in submissions to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. Although the committee recommended passage of this bill, it encouraged my consideration of whether there was scope to refine the criteria for declaration of a PDA-associated development to address these concerns. On that basis, I intend to move amendments during consideration in detail that clarify the intended scope of these provisions. For example, the proposed amendments now treat infrastructure differently from other development. Some other minor and consequential amendments have also been proposed to ensure the effective operation of the PDA-associated development provisions.

I would now like to speak to the Brisbane Casino Agreement Amendment Bill. This is a companion bill to the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Bill. Its purpose is solely to remove the current development legislation exemption provided under the Brisbane Casino Agreement. This will allow a development application for the repurposing of the existing Brisbane casino and hotel complex and site to be lodged under the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Priority Development Area development scheme. The bill amends the Brisbane Casino Agreement Act 1992 to replace the Brisbane Casino Agreement, which is a schedule to this act, with a revised agreement that no longer exempts the Brisbane casino and hotel complex and site from development legislation in force in the local government area.

These changes will not impact on the current use rights of the casino operator under the current special lease while the existing Brisbane casino-hotel complex is operating. As such, development relating to the current use of the Brisbane casino-hotel complex will continue to be considered under the Brisbane Casino Agreement until the Brisbane Casino Agreement Act 1992 is repealed, which will be shortly after the Queen's Wharf Brisbane casino opens.

All heritage listed features, places and buildings in the precinct will be retained and refurbished to their former glory and adaptively re-used for the enjoyment of the general public. The Brisbane Casino Agreement Bill provides that the redevelopment of the existing casino buildings and all other heritage places in the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Priority Development Area are subject to an independent development assessment process managed by the Minister for Economic Development Queensland. For heritage places currently included under the Brisbane Casino Agreement, until such time as the existing lease period ends, I will continue to consider development matters relating to these areas in accordance with the Heritage Management Plan. Once the lease period ends, responsibility for development assessment relating to all heritage places in the priority development area will transfer from myself to the Minister for Economic Development Queensland.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee for its consideration of the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Bill 2015 and the Brisbane Casino Agreement Amendment Bill 2016, and also those who made written submissions to the committee on the bills. In this regard, I am pleased to note that the committee has recommended that the bills be passed.

My speech so far has been devoted to outlining to the House the technical aspects of the bills. It is a fact that the bills before the House are technical in nature. However, we should not lose sight of the significant economic benefits the passage of these bills will have for Queenslanders. Apart from the 1.4 million additional tourists a year, the project will provide Queenslanders with more than \$1 billion to the state's bottom line; 12 football fields of enhanced public open space; a new pedestrian bridge from the CBD to South Bank; 50 new food and beverage outlets; about 1,100 hotel rooms, ranging from four- to six-star; 2,000 residential apartments; and revitalisation of some of Brisbane's most significant heritage buildings.

As a member of the Palaszczuk government, I am happy to inform the House that Queen's Wharf Brisbane will significantly stimulate the construction, tourism and hospitality sectors and open new markets and opportunities for Queensland with the creation of more than 2,000 construction jobs and 8,000 ongoing jobs when the \$3 billion integrated resort development is operational in 2022.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to job creation and supporting skills development across the state. As the Minister for Training and Skills, I can advise the House the Department of Education and Training and Jobs Queensland secretariat have been consulting with the Department of State Development and the Destination Brisbane Consortium regarding assistance that it may be able to provide in workforce planning and skills and training development opportunities. The department is well placed to assist the consortium to make the most of funding opportunities under the government's existing VET investment programs, as well as explore other ways that the government may be able to assist and help navigate the training system and engage with the right people.

In particular, DET can provide assistance with the range of training and skills programs that are funded through the Palaszczuk government's Annual VET Investment Plan—\$754.6 million worth of funding in 2015-16. DET will continue to liaise with DBC and DSD in order to maximise the employment and training opportunities for Queensland students, apprentices and trainees available through the overall Queen's Wharf redevelopment projects. The Queen's Wharf development will not just provide full-time job opportunities for our existing workforce, but through TAFE Queensland, Queensland's trusted provider of vocational education and training, our teenagers will have available to them the necessary training to become Queensland's next generation of highly skilled workers.

The Queen's Wharf precinct will feature a number of high-end hotels and some 50 food and beverage outlets come 2018. There will be an unprecedented amount of not only hospitality work but also rewarding and long-lasting careers in one of Queensland's most dynamic and exciting industries.

The Queensland Hotel & Hospitality School is a new initiative created in partnership with TAFE Queensland and The Star Entertainment Group to develop the next generation of six-star hospitality staff for the Queen's Wharf precinct. Industry partners have also supported the school to provide feedback on industry needs and trends and also work experience opportunities for students. In addition to The Star Entertainment Group, the industry partners for the new hotel school include: Sofitel Brisbane Central; Hilton Brisbane; Hotel Jen Brisbane; NEXT Hotels Brisbane; Royal International Convention Centre; Sea World Resort & Waterpark; Palazzo Versace; and Intercontinental Sanctuary Cove Resort.

At present, the QHHS offers the International Hospitality Service Program as well as the Culinary Arts Program. The Culinary Arts Program is an enhanced Certificate III in Commercial Cookery—Apprenticeship program, designed to train new chefs at a six-star level. The QHHS is looking to develop further programs in the future. The International Hospitality Service Program has been designed to provide the hospitality industry with a specific outcome. Students are trained at a six-star level and are skilled and employable as soon as they finish the course. Key industry partners have been involved in choosing modules, contextualising modules to a six-star level and providing masterclasses. Training delivery is currently split between TAFE Queensland's world-class, cutting-edge facilities at South Bank, industry partners and The Star Entertainment Group's hotels.

The Palaszczuk government's investment in TAFE Queensland acknowledges the significant role TAFE Queensland has in delivering the skills needed now and into the future to meet the demands of significant projects such as this one. This training will enhance the workforce for all tourism and hospitality, including making sure that we have a six-star trained hospitality and tourism workforce for the Commonwealth Games in 2018.

I urge all members to provide their support for the bills today as they provide the necessary legislative basis for the Queen's Wharf project to move forward to the next stage in its development. I am pleased to be able to sponsor these bills and thank my honourable colleagues, the Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment; the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines; the staff of their departments and my own department, for their hard work and assistance in bringing these bills to the House for consideration today. I commend the bills to the House.