




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (TRANSPARENCY AND
ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.45 pm): The Palaszczuk government's planning reforms will put Queensland on track to have the best planning and development assessment system in Australia. The Planning Bill and associated legislation were passed last year and will come into effect on 3 July 2017. This legislation will support responsible development and ensure genuine public participation in the planning process. The new planning system will enable communities, councils and industry to shape the future of their streets, suburbs and regions. The reforms will ensure that Queensland's planning system is fair, open, transparent and easy to understand.

The Palaszczuk government supports planning reform to deliver a more efficient system that supports investment in jobs, but does not believe that this should come at the expense of community participation or the important role of local government. Since the bills were passed, the government has been working with a range of stakeholders to ensure that the system will be ready to go from day one. In particular, the government has worked in partnership with local governments to make sure that the transition will be as seamless as possible.

In the meantime, the proposed amendments to the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 ensure that communities will have a strong voice in the planning and development decisions that affect the neighbourhoods and communities where they work, live and play. Local government will continue to play the lead role in deciding local development outcomes: what development is permitted and the form in which that development should occur.

In honouring the Palaszczuk government's election promise to Queenslanders that it would listen, the amendments in this bill reintroduce cost provisions to the SPA where each party bears their own costs so that the community is no longer at risk of massive legal bills for appealing development decisions. This amendment delivers on Labor's election commitment to restore rights that were stripped away by the former Newman government. It means that, if residents appeal a development decision, they will not have to wear substantial costs.

The bill also provides for increased penalties for development offences from 1,665 penalty units to 4,500 penalty units. The bill addresses legislative issues with the SPA, the Planning Act 2016 and the Building Act 1975 arising from recent decisions of the Planning and Environment Court and Court of Appeal concerning the assessment of building work by local governments and private certifiers. This process will be clarified so that there is more certainty for all of those involved in planning and development, particularly when it comes to protecting character housing.

The amendment to the Sustainable Planning Act will provide for perpetrators to be prosecuted if it is proven that they committed an offence by carrying out unlawful demolition or development. Currently, the maximum penalty for such an offence is more than \$202,000 per property. The amendment in this bill significantly increases this penalty to more than \$548,000 per property to provide an even greater deterrent to unlawful development activity.

Further, since the bills were passed in 2016, the government has had the opportunity to test them and refine them with key stakeholders, such as local governments. That is part of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to constant engagement and improvement, ensuring that the Queensland planning system gets better with every step. I commend the bill to the House.