




Speech By  
**Barry O'Rourke**

**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 November 2021

**QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (12.45 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland University of Technology Amendment Bill 2021. This bill recommends changes to the composition of the Queensland University of Technology—QUT—Council, which has responsibility for ensuring the effective management of the facility. The QUT Council is established under the Queensland University of Technology Act 1998 to operate as QUT's governing body. The QUT Council has powers to do anything necessary in connection with its functions as the governing body, including the appointment of university staff to manage and control the university's affairs and properties, and to manage and control the university's finances.

The current QUT Act provides for the governing council to have 22 members. This amendment bill proposes to reduce the size of the QUT Council from 22 to 15 members with the following changes to the composition: three members appointed by the Governor in Council, reduced from eight; five elected members, reduced from nine, comprising two members of the academic staff, one member of the professional staff, one undergraduate student and one postgraduate student; and four additional members, increased from two, and at least two of them must be former students of QUT.

The committee called for written submissions and received three in total, being from Griffith University; the National Tertiary Education Union, Queensland division; and Queensland University of Technology, Chancellery Division. We also held a public hearing and two department briefings. The submissions from Griffith University and QUT supported the proposed amendments. They considered that a smaller governing body will ensure the appropriate representation for the university and improve the effectiveness, participation and responsiveness in council meetings and operations. The National Tertiary Education Union did not support the bill as they believe the changes to the governing council membership were not required and believe that the current governing council continues to serve the university well. The Department of Education consulted with QUT, all other Queensland public universities and the National Tertiary Education Union, Queensland branch, on the proposed draft of the bill. No changes were made to the bill as a result of that consultation.

The committee made two recommendations, both unanimously supported, that the bill be passed and that the minister amend the bill to clarify that an elected academic staff member or an elected professional staff member of the QUT Council who ceases to be a member under sections 77 and 78 of the bill continues to be eligible to fill casual vacancies under section 20A of the Queensland University of Technology Act 1998 during the current QUT Council term. The recommendation is to clarify the eligibility of elected academic and professional staff members whose terms end under the transition provisions to be appointed in the event of a casual vacancy. The committee noted the advice of the department that it supported a clarifying amendment. I acknowledge my fellow committee members, the secretariat and all the staff involved. I commend the bill to the House.