




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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SUPERANNUATION (STATE PUBLIC SECTOR) (SCHEME ADMINISTRATION) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (3.04 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. How good is superannuation? I think at the moment it has a quoted value of around \$3.3 trillion. It makes a great contribution to our quality of life and the quality of our investments. We are looking at retirement funds that are far safer and that make retirement far more enjoyable than that of previous generations. There is no doubt that superannuation is a fundamental economic part of our future.

QSuper and Sunsuper are Queensland's largest superannuation funds and are amongst the largest in the country. This bill ensures the merged fund will be based in Queensland, building on the opportunities QSuper and Sunsuper have already provided to the state. Importantly, the merger is expected to anchor around 2,000 jobs in Queensland. The boards of both funds have made strong commitments around employment security for rank-and-file employees. Existing employees will be protected and Queensland will benefit as new employment opportunities emerge through marketing and technology innovations.

The merged fund will compete nationally, but the really good news is that its headquarters will remain in Brisbane. We know that in the future we will see larger and bigger organisations moving to Brisbane. At the moment Sydney and Melbourne are a little bit unattractive and a little too expensive. We are far more competitive. The main office of the majority of the trustee's business areas will remain in Queensland. That means increased account balances for members, higher retirement incomes, which is vitally important with an ageing population, and a boost to economic activity in Queensland. Queensland is an attractive place for new businesses to invest. That has been proven again this month with the new \$1 billion-plus investment in our hydrogen industry. We expect to see those investments continue, creating and growing new industries. Having a \$200 billion superannuation fund in Queensland reinforces that this state is the preferred destination for businesses to establish themselves and to grow.

Importantly, this is a merger of two equally strong and respected funds. The boards of the two funds, having received significant legal and taxation advice and undertaking appropriate due diligence, determined that the best option for members was to retain Sunsuper Pty Ltd as the corporate trustee operating under the new name and a new constitution. The initial board is proposed to consist of seven currently serving QSuper trustees and six currently serving Sunsuper directors. It is proposed that the new board will consist of 13 members, including three independent directors and four employer directors. The seven directors will be selected by the superannuation fund nominee panel, which will consist of two government representatives, two representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland and the chair of the board. The panel's two nominees of the board to represent the interests of the Queensland government must be approved by the Treasurer.

The Queensland government does not own QSuper. While QSuper is established under legislation, it is a trust. Like any trust it has trustees who make up the QSuper board, beneficiaries who are members of QSuper and assets, which are members' superannuation entitlements that are managed by the trustees for the benefit of those beneficiaries. The Treasurer appoints the trustees of the QSuper board. That is the extent of government exercise over the QSuper board.

As I said earlier, superannuation adds significantly to our quality of life and to our investment portfolios. This bill consolidates and adds so much more to it. In keeping with Commonwealth superannuation rules, the rules of the QSuper trust, the Superannuation (State Public Sector) Deed 1990, can only be changed with the consent of the trustees. Because it is a trust, it is already a standalone entity and, therefore, the government does not own QSuper and cannot privatise it.

Sunsuper Pty Ltd is a trust deed company which manages assets and superannuation contributions on behalf of its members. This is a merger—a coming together of two large and well-performing superannuation funds—to make the second largest superannuation fund in Australia. Both the QSuper and Sunsuper boards believe that the merger is in the best interests of its members. It is their decision to merge. As I said, this is positive for their members. It continues to see strong economic growth in Brisbane. It is a positive thing for Queenslanders. I thank the committee and the secretariat for their hard work and acknowledge all those who made contributions to this important legislation. I am very proud to support this bill.