




Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2023

LAND VALUATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (11.16 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Land Valuation Act 2010 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Transport and Resources Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Land Valuation Amendment Bill 2023 [1173](#).

Tabled paper: Land Valuation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes [1174](#).

Tabled paper: Land Valuation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [1175](#).

Today I introduce to the House the Land Valuation Amendment Bill 2023 which will improve the administration and operation of Queensland's statutory land valuation framework. Statutory valuations provide a fundamental input into Queensland's economy. Valuations inform the setting of state land tax, local government rates and state land rent that raise revenue.

The bill amends the Land Valuation Act 2010 to ensure statutory valuations are consistent and defensible, and the supporting processes such as objections and appeals are fair, efficient, and non-adversarial. Let me be clear for the benefit of the House: these changes will have no material impact on rates and property taxes. These legislative improvements were identified in consultation with key industry stakeholders, continuing the government's work to improve statewide valuation services.

Every year, the Valuer-General values land in local government areas, with the valuation roll growing at an average of 15,000 properties per year. In the 2023 annual valuation program, the Valuer-General undertook approximately 800,000 statutory valuations. This bill will support the Valuer-General in delivering one of Queensland's largest annual programs.

Since the commencement of the act in 2010, real estate markets have undergone significant changes, with mixed-use, transport orientated and multilayered volumetric developments emerging as an efficient way of using limited real estate. This has created difficulties in valuing these complex properties. The bill ensures the continual improvement of statewide valuation practices and responsiveness to reforms in the property sector from changing land uses by enabling the Valuer-General to make statutory guidelines for use by valuers. This will provide a practical framework to assist valuers in undertaking valuations of these complex properties.

Regularly reviewed and updated guidelines will ensure the framework remains current and relevant in a dynamic property environment, with consistent valuation practices applied to evolving sectors such as carbon farming. To be effective, the guidelines will require involvement and input from all key stakeholders. When developed, they will be published and tabled in parliament.

In undertaking valuations, the Valuer-General makes decisions in relation to the configuration of the land for valuation purposes, including whether to combine non-adjointing farm lots or parcels. The bill will now allow rural landowners to make these decisions about how their land is valued in line with

how they use those lands. It is more efficient for the landowner to make these decisions rather than the Valuer-General, because in some cases landowners do not want their lands combined—for example, to allow for succession planning or where the diversification of land use is planned and the combining lots do not align with those plans.

The bill will give more options to landholders about how valuation notices are delivered. We know that this is a changing world, and it is important that we give people options about how they receive their information. In keeping pace with technology, landowners can now elect to receive their valuation notices by post, electronic mail, SMS or text message. This is about ensuring people get the services they want and need from this government.

In recent years, discussions around the release of annual valuations has raised questions in relation to the effect of natural disasters, such as floods, on valuations. While we know that historical valuations have been accurate and have taken into account all relevant impacts on land values, additional flexibility for the Valuer-General is provided in the bill. The bill gives the Valuer-General discretion not to make an annual valuation because of unusual circumstances when it is considered not appropriate to do so. While it may be possible, there are circumstances where it would not be appropriate. For example, it may not be appropriate to make an annual valuation because the occurrence of an unusual circumstance, such as a flood, may have affected the value of the land.

A landowner's right to object to the valuation of their land is fundamental to the statutory land valuation framework. A landowner has 60 days to lodge an objection to their valuation. The bill amends the objection process to ensure it is efficient and effective. We want to continue to deliver good services for Queenslanders, and these amendments will help to do exactly that. Queensland's objection framework is best practice. Over the past five years, the objection rate has been between only 0.2 and 0.5 per cent of all land valuations issued annually. However, there are opportunities for more objections to be resolved before proceeding to the Land Court. Independently chaired objection conferences have proven to be an effective way of resolving these objections. Over the past five years, on average, over 75 per cent of objections eligible for a conference were resolved prior to proceeding to the Land Court.

This bill removes an arbitrary threshold for when the Valuer-General must offer an independently chaired conference. This amendment allows all objectors access to conferences—not just those with valuations over \$5 million. The complexity of the valuation is not necessarily related to its value, as other factors, such as the availability of sales evidence and unique property-specific attributes, may increase complexity. Properties under \$5 million may be more complex than those over \$5 million.

It is essential that objections are resolved through the most efficient means, as values underpin the assessment of land tax, rates and state land rental. When objection decisions are delayed and the outcome is a lesser valuation, landowners can overpay the land taxes and rates, requiring local governments to refund the difference. This uncertainty impacts landowners, local governments' ability to plan and manage their budgets as well as the Valuer-General's capability to deliver the follow year's valuation program. As a government, we will always look at ways to make things better and more efficient for Queenslanders, and these amendments will do exactly that.

The bill will also ensure all parties are engaged in the objection process and share relevant information in good faith to improve the objections process and to realise greater efficiencies for all. This will be achieved by encouraging the disclosure of all relevant information before an independently chaired objection conference starts; enabling an independent chairperson to request further information; requiring a chairperson to prepare a written report about the conference including any recommendations for parties; and making the Valuer-General's power to request further information applicable to all valuations for consistency.

Several other minor amendments are also proposed to clarify certain provisions. I am confident that the amendments to the Land Valuation Act 2010 deliver a statutory land valuation framework that is recognised for its contemporary capability, efficiency and effectiveness. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. SJ STEWART (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (11.24 am): 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 Transport and Resources Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transport and Resources Committee.