



Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2024

CROSS-BORDER COMMISSIONER BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (11.25 am): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): The message from Her Excellency the Governor recommends the Cross-Border Commissioner Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

CROSS-BORDER COMMISSIONER BILL 2024

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, DR JEANNETTE ROSITA YOUNG AC PSM, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled—


A Bill for an Act to establish the office of cross-border commissioner and for related purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 20 August 2024

Tabled paper: Message, dated 20 August 2024, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Cross-Border Commissioner Bill 2024 [1529](#).

Introduction

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (11.26 am): I present a bill for an act to establish the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner and for related purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Cross-Border Commissioner Bill 2024 [1530](#).

Tabled paper: Cross-Border Commissioner Bill 2024, explanatory notes [1531](#).

Tabled paper: Cross-Border Commissioner Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights [1532](#).

More than 750,000 Queenslanders live in the 12 local government areas along our state's borders with New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory. Those living in communities on or near the border cross state lines every day to work, to study, to see family and friends and to access essential services. Navigating differences in regulation and service delivery, which naturally exist between jurisdictions, can be challenging for communities and add to the cost and ease of doing business in border areas. Addressing these challenges requires collaboration between states and territories and engagement with local communities.

The Cross-Border Commissioner Bill 2024 delivers on the Miles Labor government's commitment to establish a cross-border commissioner to help manage cross-border issues and to work collaboratively with neighbouring jurisdictions on service delivery and economic opportunities. The announcement, made in the 2024-25 budget, was met with overwhelming support by local councils along our borders and key advocacy groups, including the Local Government Association of Queensland, Southern Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce and South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils. Goondiwindi Regional Council called it a 'significant development' that promises to address longstanding cross-border issues that have affected their community. The Southern Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce said it 'warmly welcomes the establishment of the Office of the Queensland Cross-Border Commissioner', calling it a 'pivotal development' that aligns closely with their efforts to strengthen cross-border cooperation and enhance economic opportunities that benefit both Queensland and our New South Wales neighbours.

The bill establishes the functions of the Cross-Border Commissioner and the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner and draws on best practice from similar models used in other Australian states. The commissioner's functions under the bill are to facilitate the operation of cross-border agreements, enhance engagement between stakeholders and with neighbouring jurisdictions, advocate for the resolution of issues affecting cross-border communities and provide advice to the government on cross-border issues.

In carrying out their functions, the commissioner will work collaboratively with cross-border communities and stakeholders including local governments, other state and territory governments, regional bodies, industry associations and community groups. Under the bill, the commissioner is appointed on the recommendation of the minister for a period of three years, with a maximum term of six years. The bill provides for the minister to direct the commissioner on matters relevant to the commissioner's functions and give the commissioner a statement of expectations for the performance of their duties. Details of any ministerial direction will appear in the commissioner's annual report, which will be tabled in parliament.

The bill also establishes the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner to help the commissioner perform their functions. Staff in the office will be employed under the Public Sector Act 2022 and will report directly to the commissioner. The 2024-25 budget provides \$3.26 million to support the establishment of the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner including two employees to support the commissioner in that role.

The bill is compatible with human rights under the Human Rights Act 2019. A statement of compatibility has been prepared for the bill. Border communities have advocated to us for the establishment of a cross-border commissioner in Queensland and the Miles Labor government has listened. We are delivering funding and legislation to establish this role that will be crucial in advancing the social and economic wellbeing of Queensland's border communities. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. GJ BUTCHER (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (11.30 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 Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee

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