




Speech By  
**Hon. Ann Leahy**

**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 25 June 2025

## **PLANNING (SOCIAL IMPACT AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. A LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers) (7.31 pm): I rise to support the Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. Like everything with the Crisafulli government, this bill delivers on important commitments to Queenslanders, especially those in rural and regional Queensland. Renewable energy projects, such as wind and solar farms, can have a real impact on regional communities and private landowners. My electorate knows this all too well, as do local governments across Queensland.

The bill introduces a community benefit system that establishes requirements for the social impact assessments and community benefit agreements for prescribed development applications. These changes ensure social impact and community benefit are appropriately considered and assessed before the development application is lodged. Renewable energy proponents will need to build a social licence with a host community in their local government, conduct a social impact assessment and enter into community benefit agreements with councils before starting the development assessment process. I cannot stress how welcome this legislation is, particularly in my electorate. We have listened to rural and regional Queenslanders and we are delivering meaningful consultation and benefits to the locals who actually live in those areas that are impacted by the wind and solar projects and also to the local governments.

Addressing the amendments to the South-East Queensland (Water Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 mentioned by the Deputy Premier, they provide certainty to the distributor-retailer industry and the South-East Queensland community by confirming that infrastructure charges notices already issued remain valid. Consequential amendments also provide that the distributor-retailer boards cannot adopt a charge for trunk infrastructure related to public housing or trunk infrastructure prescribed by regulation for another development. I will go into some more detail about the proposed amendments. The amendments ensure charges can continue to be levied by the South-East Queensland distributor-retailers, Urban Utilities and Unitywater, when the connection generates additional demand on water or wastewater trunk infrastructure. Further, they ensure a consistent infrastructure charging framework for all water and wastewater service providers, whether they are distributor-retailers or local councils.

My department has partnered with the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning to ensure these amendments are consistent with those proposed in the Planning Act 2016. Planning Act amendments relate to the local government infrastructure charges framework. The existing charging framework that applies to public housing is also being clarified with consequential amendments. These amendments make it clear that the distributor-retailer boards can adopt a charge for trunk infrastructure related to public housing. It maintains the status quo arrangements for this type of development. Combined, Urban Utilities and Unitywater service over 2.3 million customers and approximately 62 per cent of the South-East Queensland region. These distributor-retailers are council

owned, with Urban Utilities servicing the Brisbane, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim and Somerset local council areas and Unitywater servicing the Moreton Bay, Sunshine Coast and Noosa local council areas. The remaining south-east local councils, Logan, Redland and the Gold Coast, provide water and wastewater services in their respective council areas and issue their infrastructure charges under the Planning Act 2016. Likewise, local councils outside South-East Queensland issue infrastructure charges under the Planning Act framework.

Infrastructure charges are vital in delivering essential infrastructure for new development and are beneficial to the development industry and community alike. To provide consistency in the framework that applies to the trunk infrastructure that local councils and distributor-retailers are responsible for, the amendments being made to the South-East Queensland (Water Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 follow the amendments mentioned by the Deputy Premier in relation to the Planning Act 2016. These amendments put beyond doubt the established arrangements that support our infrastructure networks. They will ensure that the developments placing burden on our trunk infrastructure networks continue to pay their fair share. I understand these amendments to clarify the levying of infrastructure charges for the additional demand placed on trunk infrastructure are supported by both Urban Utilities and Unitywater. I commend the bill to the House.