




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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QUEENSLAND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION BILL

 **Mrs KIRKLAND** (Rockhampton—LNP) (4.53 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Productivity Commission Bill 2024. First established in 2015 by the former Labor government, the productivity commission had five referrals in its initial year, providing valuable insights. Commission referrals then slowed to less than two each year until 2021, when it was cut by Labor. The former treasurer said that the former commission was being abolished so that its work, which was once independent and rigorous, could continue inside government agencies. It is the very independence of the commission, accompanied by rigour, responsiveness, openness and effectiveness, that guides the commission. Under current arrangements, this work happens behind closed doors within government departments without an open, transparent process informed by public consultation—consultation that should come from the communities and industries that are impacted by the legislated regulations set by this government. In its submission on the QPC Bill, the Property Council of Australia stated—

... engagement with relevant stakeholders, industries and their representatives will be critical in ensuring economic and social issues impacting Queenslanders are well understood.

Good stewardship of the Queensland taxpayer dollar is expected, and Queenslanders deserve to have transparency on how that is being managed. In performing its functions, the bill states that the commission should have particular regard to productivity, economic growth and improving living standards in Queensland. Lower productivity equals lower economic growth, lower wages, higher unemployment and higher inflation. The re-established commission will help lift Queensland's productivity growth by identifying areas for improvement to policy and regulatory settings to support business activity and income growth. It will help provide improved government service and deliver on the government's housing and infrastructure priorities.

It is the Productivity Commission's role to report on ways to increase productivity as a monitor to bring accountability and ensure return on investment. Small and medium enterprises across this great state regularly do external reviews, have mystery shoppers and do independent audits because, as the saying goes, you cannot read the label from inside the jar. This was said to me in recent conversations around the Productivity Commission that I had with the chair of the Capricornia Chamber of Commerce. What does reinstatement of the Productivity Commission mean for communities like Rockhampton and Gracemere? I would like to read a letter sent to me by a local businessman working within the construction industry. The letter states—

I am writing on behalf of my business and the broader Central Queensland business community to urge your support for reinstating the Queensland Productivity Commission.

As a local business, we see firsthand how excessive red tape, regulatory delays, and rising compliance costs are crippling productivity and slowing economic growth. The QPC played a vital role in identifying inefficiencies, cutting unnecessary regulation, and ensuring businesses could thrive, its abolition has left a dangerous gap in independent oversight.

Without the QPC, businesses are facing:

Excessive regulatory burdens that cost time and money without improving safety or environmental outcomes.

Delays in project approvals, especially for infrastructure and development, costing Queensland billions in lost opportunities.

Higher costs of compliance, making it harder for small and medium businesses to compete and expand.

The LNP has always championed economic growth, reducing red tape, and supporting local businesses. Reinstating the QPC would send a clear message that the government is committed to cutting unnecessary bureaucracy and ensuring policies work in practice, not just on paper.

The core function of the commission will be to undertake reviews of complex economic, social and regulatory issues and provide advice and recommendations to the government. In answer to the call from Queenslanders, the reformed Queensland Productivity Commission's task will be to identify opportunities to slash red tape and reduce unnecessary regulation. This will reduce costs for Queensland businesses and, of course, consumers. I would like to commend the work already done by our Minister for Housing in this space with the Building Reg Reno for our construction industry.

The work of the QPC includes seeking opportunities for productivity gains through efficient planning frameworks such as unlocking land and skilled labour to help address the housing crisis. A strategic approach to productivity is more important than ever, which means finding ways to enhance a modern and skilled workforce. Constituting the QPC as a statutory body will ensure that the QPC will be independent from government, and this independence is actually enshrined in the bill. No longer will the work expected through this independent body be carried out behind closed doors within government departments.

The reinstated Queensland Productivity Commission's first task will be to conduct an inquiry into opportunities to enhance productivity in the building and construction industry which has been hampered by declining productivity growth. This is welcomed by regional areas of our great state, such as Rockhampton. Queensland needs its own independent productivity commission to secure our future environmental, economic and social prosperity. The recommendation from the committee report is that the bill be passed. On behalf of the people of Rockhampton and Gracemere, I too commend the bill.