

~~This government has allocated \$2 million to deliver the new regrowth measures in partnership with stakeholder groups such as AgForce. I will be working quickly to discuss with stakeholders the most effective way to implement the new regrowth regulations and help landholders understand their responsibilities. As well, the department has developed guides, fact sheets and website information to help landholders understand and follow the code. Landholders will also be able to talk to departmental staff who can explain the new rules. I have made a commitment to remake the code within 12 months and in that time to work with stakeholders to incorporate industry best management practices.~~

~~Protection of the Great Barrier Reef is a priority for this government and this bill will protect riparian or watercourse vegetation in priority reef catchments. These watercourses will also be shown on the regrowth map so landholders are clear about where the regrowth regulations apply.~~

020 ~~This bill contains retrospective provisions to prevent pre-emptive clearing of previously unregulated regrowth. Retrospectivity is justified in this case where the protection of Queensland's environment for all outweighs the interest of an individual. This bill does not impose retrospective criminal liability for protected regrowth. It does, however, provide for the department to require landholders who clear protected regrowth during the retrospective period to allow the vegetation to regrow.~~

~~In the longer term, restoration of cleared vegetation will be only one of a range of mechanisms to address unauthorised clearing. Depending on the scale and intent of an offence, the department may issue a warning letter or an infringement notice or proceed to prosecution in court. The priority for the department's compliance strategy will be ensuring that information and tools are available for landholders to do the right thing. It is necessary to limit appeal rights during the retrospective period of the bill so vulnerable regrowth remains protected. This bill limits appeal rights of landholders if the chief executive does not agree to make PMAVs during the retrospective period. If the chief executive approved PMAVs that were lodged during this period, regrowth intended to be protected by this bill may be shown as category X areas and be able to be cleared.~~

~~Other important parts of this bill are provisions to streamline operation of the Vegetation Management Act. The changes are based on client feedback and experience gained during the last five years of the current framework. This bill will streamline mapping by making PMAVs the only way to amend clearing regulations regarding regrowth identified on the regional ecosystem, remnant and regrowth maps. If a landholder disagrees with the mapping they can submit a PMAV application which locks in areas that do not contain remnant vegetation or regrowth regulated by this bill. This bill removes rights of appeal on the decision to approve regrowth and regional ecosystem maps but does this only because new review and appeal provisions are provided for PMAVs. If a landholder disagrees with a mapping decision, this bill provides for a right of review and for right of appeal on the merits of the decision at the property level.~~

~~Other features include providing a clear head of power for all vegetation management codes and policies to improve their transparency and ensure that projects of significant state, regional and local benefit are given special consideration. Amendments will also make the policy related to the provision of vegetation offsets less onerous and more flexible.~~

~~This bill also contains amendments to the Land Act 1994 and the Land Title Act 1994 related to the stay on registration of tidal boundary plans. In November 2005, the government stopped the registration of tidal boundary plans of subdivision until November 2008. This was extended in 2008 for a further 12 months, until 8 November 2009. The stay was introduced after concerns were raised about beaches becoming private property and that, as a consequence, public access could be restricted and fragile dune areas could be damaged. The stay was introduced to enable the former department of natural resources and water to research and develop solutions for government consideration and consultation. The stay protects the public interest in tidal lands by controlling the registration of survey plans with a tidal boundary. Extending the stay for a further six months allows for finalisation of the legislative amendments and consideration of key stakeholder feedback in relation to this bill. I commend the bill to the House.~~

~~Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.~~

SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND (DISTRIBUTION AND RETAIL RESTRUCTURING) AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROVISIONS BILL

First Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (12.43 pm): I present a bill for an act to further restructure the water industry in South-East Queensland and to make consequential amendments to the South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) Act 2007 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Regulation 2007 and

to amend the Land Act 1994, the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act 1978, the Valuation of Land Act 1944, the Water Act 2000 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and 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.

Tabled paper: South-East Queensland (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Natural Resources Provisions Bill.

Tabled paper: South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Natural Resources Provisions Bill, explanatory notes.

Second Reading

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade) (12.43 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Natural Resources Provisions Bill 2009 will facilitate the establishment of three council owned distributor-retailer entities which will take over the provision of water and waste water services presently provided by South-East Queensland local governments. This bill is the first step in the second stage of reform of institutional arrangements for urban water supply in South-East Queensland. The first stage of reform involved the establishment of the bulk water supply, transport and manufactured water entities and also the SEQ Water Grid Manager making the SEQ Water Market operational on 1 July 2008.

In May this year I challenged councils to come forward with a model that provided for reforms in the retail and distribution sectors of the urban water sector in South-East Queensland that would deliver on the government's core objectives including improved region-wide service delivery to customers; economic regulation ensuring the lowest possible prices; asset regulation ensuring high-quality service; efficiency gains through economies of scale; and the establishment of commercially focused entities accountable to council owners, ratepayers and customers.

The model put forward by councils meets these objectives through establishing three vertically integrated, commercially focused entities that will be created to provide water and waste water services across the following three clusters of South-East Queensland local governments: the first being Brisbane, Ipswich, Scenic Rim, Somerset and Lockyer Valley; the second being Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands; and the third being Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay. The state supports the model put forward by South-East Queensland councils, and this bill ensures the timely delivery of that outcome.

This bill will facilitate establishment of the three entities. It provides that the entities will be owned by South-East Queensland councils and establishes a framework under which the rights and obligations of councils are clearly defined.

The assets will continue to be owned by councils through the entities. However, the reforms will ensure that they are managed efficiently and effectively and support delivery of the South-East Queensland regional plans and South East Queensland Water Strategy. This bill will enable the transfer of functions, assets and liabilities for water distribution and waste water treatment from the current 10 South-East Queensland local governments to the new distributor-retailer entities. This bill also gives legislative recognition to the employee framework which will protect the interests of South-East Queensland local government employees who may be affected either directly or indirectly by the reform process.

The commencement of this bill will enable South-East Queensland councils to continue to take steps necessary to enable the entities to be established and to take over South-East Queensland local government functions related to water reticulation, sewage collection and treatment and water retail and to allow these entities to become operational by July 2010.

When complete, the reforms to South-East Queensland's water market will significantly simplify the way in which water is managed in the region by reducing the number of organisations involved in managing our water supply from 21 to seven specialist entities. It will deliver for customers regionally consistent and guaranteed service standards, consistent billing and improved complaints handling and independent dispute resolution.

Another important amendment in this bill is to amend the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act 1878 which will extend the Aurukun and Mornington shire leases until 2059. This amendment is being made so that these communities can secure significant housing funding from the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. Both communities are priority cases for assistance but were precluded from offering 40-year subleases to the Australian government because their own leases expire in 2029. The change also gives these councils the ability to attract other services and investment to their communities.

I will now outline the cost recovery provisions and other amendments to the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 that are contained in this bill. Among other things, the Water Supply Act regulates drinking water service providers and recycled water entities primarily to protect public health. These provisions will enable the regulator to recover reasonable costs of an investigation from a drinking water service provider or recycled water entity if there has been noncompliance with the Water Supply Act. The retrospective provisions of this bill enable the recovery of the cost of the fluoride investigation at the North Pine water treatment facility.

These amendments will also enhance the ability of the regulator to respond to drinking or recycled water quality issues. This will be done by increasing the regulator's powers for obtaining and sharing information and dealing with potential, real emergency and non-urgent water quality issues which may have an adverse effect on public health. These amendments will enable the regulator to recover reasonable costs when direct action is taken in dealing with an adverse health matter for an emergency or non-urgent water quality issue. These amendments will also allow more comprehensive reporting by the regulator and make minor refinements to the Water Supply Act.

This bill will also amend the Valuation of Land Act 1944 to give the Department of Environment and Resource Management an additional year—to 31 August 2010—to continue to issue valuations based on pre-amalgamation local government boundaries. As members are aware, the department's State Valuation Service provides statutory valuations as a basis from which local governments can set rateable values, for the Office of State Revenue to calculate land tax and for the department to determine state land rentals. The whole state is not valued each year, and valuations are based on what the property market reflects at a particular point in time.

When local governments were amalgamated in Queensland, many of the new local government areas were made up of existing areas on different levels of value. This was to have been corrected over the next two annual valuation cycles. However, the second annual valuation was postponed this year because increases in property valuations would have been an unreasonable burden on landowners already affected by the global financial situation and extreme weather conditions in Queensland.

Of the 17 local governments identified for annual valuations this year, four were amalgamated entities: the Western Downs, Southern Downs, Moreton Bay and Rockhampton regional councils. The earliest these local governments can now be valued is next year, but present legislation only authorises the department to operate on the old boundaries until the end of August 2009. This retrospective amendment will allow the department to value the remaining old local government areas that have been amalgamated in 2010, with no gap in the coverage provided by section 75M of the Valuation of Land Act.

Finally, this bill will amend the Land Act 1994 to enable the establishment of renewable energy projects such as wind farms on state leasehold land. In the present climate, more and more electricity companies are turning to wind power as a clean energy source that does not involve burning fossil fuels. Although wind farms can consist of several hundred individual turbines and cover large areas of land, many land uses such as agriculture and grazing are compatible with their use. These amendments will enable the broadening of the lease conditions on large rural leasehold properties, such as pastoral leases, to allow wind farms to co-exist with grazing and agricultural uses of state leasehold land.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12.52 pm to 2.30 pm.

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~~HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW BILL~~

~~First Reading~~

~~Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act providing for the adoption of a national law to establish a national registration and accreditation scheme for health practitioners. I present the explanatory notes, and 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.~~

~~Tabled paper: Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Bill.~~

~~Tabled paper: Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Bill, explanatory notes.~~

~~Second Reading~~

~~Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health) (2.30 pm): I move~~