

SEATH HOLSWICH MP

the administrative component of the water network in South-East Queensland, allowing for cost savings that will ultimately be passed on to consumers. This legislation is just one of many small steps that all lead us in the direction of a better managed water network, resulting ultimately in lower water charges for Queensland households and businesses.

Importantly, though, as well as contributing to increased efficiencies and cost savings for water businesses and councils, I believe this bill also maintains the standard protections and entitlements for water business and council employees who will be affected by this legislation. These entitlements and conditions were a key focus of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee during our consideration of the bill.

This bill brings water business employees back in line with the conditions of other council employees whilst still maintaining important provisions such as no forced redundancies for a fixed period until 30 June 2013. The enterprise bargaining agreement that was negotiated in 2011 ensures that this requirement is maintained, which effectively makes that particular aspect of the existing legislation redundant.

This bill also ensures that the long service entitlements of Allconnex employees are preserved as they move back to being employed by their respective councils. I note the concerns that have already been raised that the time frame for this bill made it difficult for the committee to widely consult on the issues raised by the bill and to receive extensive written submissions, as is the usual method. However, given the time constraints of the bill, given the fact that Allconnex employees have now already moved back to their respective councils, I think the situation was somewhat unavoidable.

In spite of this constraint and after the briefings that were provided during the committee phase, it is my opinion that this bill adequately achieves its dual aims of reducing administrative burden and costs for water businesses and councils as well as ensuring that there are proper transitional arrangements to protect employees. As such, I am pleased to be able to support this bill.

I commend the bill to the House.