



The Palaszczuk Labor Government

24 November 2017

Ms Stacey Rawlings
Queensland Manager
Engineers Australia
Sent via email: srawlings@engineersaustralia.org.au

Dear Ms Rawlings

Thank you for your email seeking Queensland Labor's views on priority issues for Engineers Australia. A response to the six priority areas is provided below.

1. Integrated and long term infrastructure planning

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to building on our strong record for long-term infrastructure planning.

Key to Queensland's infrastructure planning is the State Infrastructure Plan (SIP); a comprehensive infrastructure plan including both long-term planning and strategy for Queensland Infrastructure (Part A updated every five years) and an annual update outlining the Government's four year program of works. The SIP provides confidence and certainty to industry, local government and the community.

The Palaszczuk Government's publishing of the SIP is in stark contrast to the previous LNP Government's non-existent infrastructure plan. The former LNP Government under Tim Nicholls failed to deliver an infrastructure plan of any sort.

The Palaszczuk Government is also pursuing long-term infrastructure planning through its regional planning process in co-operation with councils. The first regional plan is the South East Queensland Regional Plan. It is a 50-year vision, and includes a 25-year plan. The Regional Plan highlights the importance of infrastructure and lists region-shaping infrastructure needed to support the next 25 years of growth. Under the Palaszczuk Government, regional planning has become a community conversation so that all stakeholders can contribute to and inform the process.

Depoliticising infrastructure decisions and funding is also the reason that the Palaszczuk Government has been leading Australia in delivering City Deals, with the first one signed in Townsville in late 2016. A South East Queensland deal is also being pursued with both the Commonwealth and local governments.

Another key achievement of the Palaszczuk Government is the creation of the independent Building Queensland, which provides independent infrastructure assessment for projects over \$50 million. Building Queensland business cases form



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the basis of submissions to the Infrastructure Australia pipeline. Building Queensland's independent assessment provides certainty and transparency for industry and community.

Infrastructure spending in regional communities is vital, and a particular focus of the Palaszczuk Government. In the 2017-18 budget over \$4.8 billion of the capital budget, or 47 per cent, is being invested in regional Queensland. This investment includes a number of programs which target regional Queensland including the \$400 million Works for Queensland program, the \$180 million Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program and the \$300 million Priority Economic Works and Productivity Program.

2. Chief Engineer

The Palaszczuk Government currently has two Chief Engineer roles, placed within the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, and the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

A second-term Palaszczuk Government will consider the benefits of establishing a State Chief Engineer for Queensland.

Labor will consult with Engineers Australia, the funders and financiers of major projects, existing major engineering-reliant industries, and representatives from fast-growing and innovative technology-based industries. We will also examine outcomes of Victoria's recent move to create a State Chief Engineer and consider leading international experience.

3. Energy

Delivering stable energy prices, and ensuring long-term security of electricity supply while transitioning to a cleaner energy sector is a priority for the Palaszczuk Labor Government. This is why we have delivered our Powering Queensland Plan and Energy Affordability Plan.

Under our \$1.6 billion Powering Queensland Plan we have used the levers available to us to put downwards pressure on power prices for households and businesses. We have been successful in limiting the increase in the average household electricity prices by an average of only 1.9 per cent per year over the term of our Government (compared to a 43 per cent increase over the term of the former Newman-Nicholls Government) and with the lowest wholesale price increase in the National Electricity Market.

Our Affordable Energy Plan is a \$300 million commitment to a suite of initiatives aimed at making electricity more affordable for residential and small business customers. The Plan includes our commitment to keeping electricity prices below inflation on average for typical household and small business customers over the next two years.

We will keep pulling the levers available to us because of public ownership of our generation assets, to keep prices down. As recently announced by the Premier, a second-term Palaszczuk Government will establish a new publically owned CleanCo with a mandate to deliver 1000MW of renewable energy with a focus on flexible dispatchable generation and introduce more competition to the wholesale market.

In addition, Queensland Labor will continue to keep the pressure on the Turnbull Government to deliver certainty and integrated climate and energy policy. New reliable electricity supply to the market will put downwards pressure on prices, and ensure outcomes of the Finkel Review deliver for Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Government is preparing for the transition to electric vehicles (EVs). As part of this we recently launched our EV strategy - The Future is Electric: Queensland's Electric Vehicle Strategy. A key feature of this strategy is the Queensland Electric Super Highway - the world's longest electric fast-charging highway in a single state. Once complete motorists will be able to travel from the Gold Coast to Cairns and west from Brisbane to Toowoomba in a low or zero emissions vehicle.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Government would welcome further discussions with Engineers Australia regarding the role of engineering solutions to the State's energy transition plans. For further details on our plans for powering Queensland's

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future please visit <https://www.queenslandlabor.org/media/20293/alpq-powering-queenslands-future-policy-document-final.pdf>



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4. STEM Education

We know that Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics skills are vital if Queensland students are to be prepared for a range of jobs; both those developing now and the jobs of the future. That is why the Palaszczuk Government has invested \$81 million over four years to employ STEM specialists in primary schools throughout Queensland, and why we are taking STEM learning experiences to rural and regional Queensland through our Create Queensland regional roadshow.

Through the establishment of a Queensland Coding Academy we are providing hands-on learning opportunities for students and teachers and providing connections to the real world of work and research.

The Palaszczuk Government has also supported teachers through professional development opportunities to boost their knowledge and skills in STEM. In conjunction with Griffith University and Queensland University of Technology we have provided professional development to more than 2,500 teachers through online STEM courses like:

- P-10 Digital Technologies – Coding and Robotics;
- Primary Science Prep – 4 and Years 5 to 6;
- Junior Secondary Maths and Science; and
- Senior Physics, Maths B and Chemistry.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Government will continue to inspire more students to pursue STEM studies through:

- Virtual STEM academies to deliver programs for the best and brightest in Years 5 to 9;
- STEM Girl Power Camp to promote the participation and high achievement in STEM for girls; and
- Engaging regional STEM champions to lift Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievement and participation in STEM.

We will also continue our focus on coding and robotics in state schools by ensuring that every state school offers the Digital technologies curriculum, including coding and robotics.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Government will also extend partnerships with industry, universities and researchers to connect students and schools with cutting edge innovation and provide opportunities to work with industries to shape ideas and business plans.

5. Water Security

The Palaszczuk Government has, and will continue to make security of water supply a key priority.

We understand that a secure water supply will support our communities and provide confidence for the continued expansion of industries that support jobs.

Labor governments delivered water security for southeast Queensland (SEQ) with the SEQ water grid which enables water to be moved across the region, from where it is plentiful, to where it is scarce. Seqwater's water security program, and the infrastructure delivered by Labor, will ensure that SEQ's water supply remains secure.

In 2017 the Palaszczuk Government delivered the Queensland Bulk Water Opportunities Statement which delivers on the commitment we made in the State Infrastructure Plan to deliver a water security strategy.

This establishes a clear strategy to get the right balance between better using bulk water infrastructure we already have and committing to new projects in the future.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Government will ensure that new investments in long life water infrastructure are a sensible use of public funds in the long term and provide the most benefit to farmers and other water users.



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We will continue to advocate for Queensland's fair share of funds under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund and for those funds to be allocated to projects which provide real, on-ground benefits for regional economies.

We will also continue our work with local Councils to ensure they have the tools they need to plan for their future water security. We will do this through the Regional Water Supply Security Assessment Program.

We have committed an investment of \$225 million to fund key water security infrastructure for Townsville – to facilitate the implementation of the Townsville Water Security Taskforce Interim report.

This funding is ready to go and can be used to fund short term solutions, such as demand management and supply efficiency measures, as well as long term infrastructure options such as the duplication of the pipeline from the Haughton Pump Station to Ross River Dam.

Labor recognises the need for entitlement security for urban consumers, including existing industries. That is why water security is prioritised in water plan revisions since 2015, and the draft of the new Cape York Water Plan. A re-elected Palaszczuk Government will continue to accord urban water security the priority it deserves, so as to provide certainty.

Under the Palaszczuk Government, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines has been using new technologies to improve water monitoring – including permanently-fixed cameras – to improve the quality and quantity of available data. Water data, such as stream height and flow value from monitoring sites, groundwater levels from monitoring bores and historic streamflow data are all available on the department's website at <https://water-monitoring.information.qld.gov.au/>. A re-elected Palaszczuk Government will ensure all data is as accessible as possible, and provided in a form that is most useful for stakeholders.

Queensland Labor recognises that, despite comprehensive management of overland flow in at-risk catchments, concerns regarding the roles and responsibilities of works within floodplains remain. A re-elected Palaszczuk Government will continue to work with stakeholders, including councils, to improve responsibility and management of Queensland's floodplains.

The Palaszczuk Government has worked with dam owners, local governments, disaster management groups and other key stakeholders to implement the recommendations of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management's Review of SunWater and Seqwater Warnings Communications, Report 1: 2015-16. Through this work, communities living and working downstream of dams will be made aware of the risks and provided with timely and clear information in flood events.

6. Registration of all engineers

Queensland has always lead the nation in its requirements for registration of engineers. For many years, we have been the only State with a comprehensive registration scheme in place for engineers. We've extended our registration



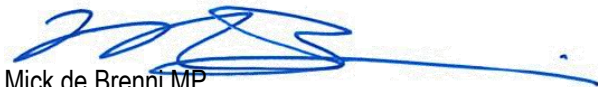
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requirements so that it is clear that registration is required whenever an engineer works on a Queensland project, regardless of where that engineer is based.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Government will consider the benefits to the industry of providing a new entry-level form of registration for young engineers who have completed the education component of registration but have not yet met the experience or competency requirements to become a fully-registered Professional Engineer – Queensland (RPEQ). In considering this we will consult widely with all stakeholders.

Thank you for providing the opportunity for Labor to provide comment on these priority issues. I trust this information is of assistance to you and your stakeholders.

Yours sincerely



Mick de Brenni MP

**Minister for Housing and Public Works and
Minister for Sport**