1. In response to the Childers backpacker accommodation fire tragedy in June 2000, the Childers Taskforce (the Taskforce) recommended investigation of fire risks in a range of high occupancy buildings and a staged program to reduce risks of multiple death fires.
2. A staged fire safety improvement program targeting high occupancy buildings across Queensland began in 2001 with the first phase targeting fire safety in budget accommodation buildings. The next phase of the program is now underway, targeting fire safety in residential care buildings (aged care and nursing homes).
3. To address fire safety concerns in new residential care buildings, the State Government introduced a fire safety standard for buildings built on or after 1 June 2007, requiring buildings to have safety sprinklers, building-wide alarms and to maintain 24 hour minimum ratios of staff to residents for evacuation support. The next stage of the program focuses on an estimated 591 residential care buildings built prior to the introduction of the new standard.
4. A Public Benefit Test (PBT) consultation process was undertaken during September 2007 on a range of potential regulatory and non-regulatory options to improve fire safety in existing buildings. The PBT concluded that the proposed regulatory options posed no restriction on competition, but identified significant costs to industry to comply with these options.
5. Due to the lack of financial information provided through the PBT process, additional consultation will be undertaken to further quantify the possible financial implications for Government and industry prior to consideration of any new regulation. As such, it is proposed to release a draft Queensland Development Code on Fire Safety in Existing Residential Care Buildings for consultation with industry.
6. Cabinet noted the outcomes of the Public Benefit Test.
7. Cabinet approved the release of a draft Queensland Development Code for the purposes of conducting industry consultation.
8. *Attachments*
* [Draft Queensland Development Code - Fire Safety in Existing Residential Care Buildings](Attachments/draft-mp-2-3-fire-safety-residential-care.pdf)