1. The Government is committed to planning properly for Queensland’s future water needs and increasing efficiency in the delivery to households and businesses.
2. Under the former Government, there were four bulk water supply entities, adding unnecessary complexity and costs (reduced to three with the merger of Seqwater and WaterSecure in June 2011). The South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 will merge the South East Queensland (SEQ) bulk water entities – Seqwater, LinkWater and the SEQ Water Grid Manager (WGM) – into a single bulk water service provider, dissolve the Queensland Water Commission (QWC) and reconfigure the operating, regulatory and planning environment to reflect the new institutional arrangements.
3. These changes send a clear message about the Government’s expectations of high quality bulk water services at least cost.
4. The amendments to the *South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) Act 2007* will enable the transfer of the WGM’s and LinkWater’s businesses into Seqwater (chosen as the vehicle for the new merged entity to limit implementation costs and risk), and the dissolution of those entities. To complement the structural changes, the current market structure and planning and regulatory framework will be simplified through amendments to the *Water Act 2000* and other key legislation, including the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.
5. The Bill also provides for the Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment, formerly a business unit within QWC, to continue its critical and independent role in proving advice on impacts of the coal seam gas operations on underground water rights of landholders.
6. In addition, the Bill removes the previous Government’s requirements for SEQ councils to have a price mitigation plan and adopt and publish a five-year price path for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2018. These requirements impose a significant process and cost burden on councils, with no direct benefit or savings to residential and business customers.
7. Cabinet approved introduction of the South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 into the Legislative Assembly.
8. *Attachments*
* [South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012](Attachments/Bill.pdf)
* [Explanatory Notes](Attachments/ExNotes.pdf)