

**INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2021**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 26 October.

**HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition)** [4.29 pm]: I am sure that the Leader of the House was desperately keen to hear my contribution to the Industry and Technology Development Amendment Bill 2021 and I am sure that she is very enthusiastic about listening to my contribution. At the outset, I put forward the position of the opposition, which is that we will support the bill. It makes sense to us to support this legislation, but I will spend a little bit of time during the second reading stage outlining a few issues and a couple of concerns, and, hopefully, we may be able to dispense with the Committee of the Whole House stage if we can get an adequate interaction as part of the process.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** You know I love interaction!

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I am happy for the odd interjection if it means we do not have to spend too much time in the committee stage of the bill.

**The PRESIDENT:** I am not that happy for the interjections, member, but please continue!

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Thank you, President. It is towards the end of the year and the conviviality is spreading! Several members interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** There are a couple of weeks to go yet!

This bill is very simple; it is not very long. It came about because the federal government has a very large amount of money available for developments in what is called the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility fund, which I believe is a fund of about \$5 billion available for developments in the northern half of Australia. That obviously covers Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. I have to say that northern development is one of those difficult but highly romantic aims that governments get very enthusiastic about. They get very excited.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan** interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** They get very excited about development in the north. In this case, a large sum of money is available. For the most part, this \$5 billion is available as low-interest or no-interest loans, depending on the business case put forward. But it would appear that part of the reason we are debating this bill is a lack of demand, shall we say, amongst the private sector, under the circumstances in which it finds itself, for the \$5 billion that has been made available.

I might just draw your attention to the clock, President, although I am happy to continue!

**The PRESIDENT:** Thank you! I have an important statement to make following that. Members, it is question time!

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

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