



Speech by

**Mr TIM MULHERIN**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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Hansard 12 April 2000

**DOMESTIC BUILDING CONTRACTS BILL; QUEENSLAND BUILDING TRIBUNAL BILL**

**Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (3.33 p.m.): I will speak briefly to the Domestic Building Contracts Bill and will focus on how the Bill will provide consumers with information to avoid pitfalls when engaging building services. Building a house can be a daunting prospect for even the most experienced individual. For most of us, it is the largest financial commitment we will make in our lives and the embodiment of the great Australian dream. Unfortunately, the dream can turn into a nightmare for some consumers. A cost blow-out can have a devastating effect on consumers who are unable to obtain further finance. Substantial delays in completion can be devastating for a consumer who has to account for unexpected rental costs. In many cases, these problems arise due to the consumer being uninformed or unaware of the operation of building contracts and the potential delay which can arise.

The Domestic Building Contracts Bill removes the mystery from building contractors by ensuring that consumers are fully informed of the building process and their obligations under the contract. For the first time consumers will have access to a Government agency approved booklet which explains the building contracting process. The booklet will be provided to all consumers entering into contracts for house building and will provide them with a plain language overview of the building process.

The Bill also requires that consumers are given crucial documentation relating to the construction of their home. Contractors will be required to give copies of documents, such as foundation data used for footing and slab design, and certifications from local authorities. Crucially, the contractors will be required to provide information on potential delays in completing the work at the time of contracting. This ensures that contractors take the utmost care in working out completion dates for contracts, which in turn provides greater certainty for the consumer in the validity of the completion date. Contractors will also be required to obtain a range of information, such as foundation data, prior to the contract being entered into. Once again, this ensures that contractors will take great care in working out the contract price, promoting confidence in the consumer about the certainty of the price.

This Bill is the final legislative step in the Beattie Labor Government's Better Building Industry reform package, which will bring in a new era of industry stability and consumer awareness for the benefit of all Queenslanders. Honourable members should compare this package to the measures canvassed by the previous Government. The former Government offered nothing to consumers. As the Minister said in her second-reading speech, consumers were set to lose some of their access to an independent, transparent dispute resolution system through the mooted abolition of the Queensland Building Tribunal. Unlike the former Government, this Government listens to consumers as well as industry.

I congratulate the Minister on her hard work in putting all this together. It has been a difficult task and there are complex issues. She has done a great job. When honourable members compare the work that she has done with the work of previous coalition Ministers, they will see that this Minister stands out as a great example of good public policy for which Labor Governments are renowned. I commend this Bill to the House.

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