



Speech by

**BONNY BARRY**

**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

---

Hansard 22 October 2002

**ARCHITECTS BILL; PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS BILL**

**Ms BARRY** (Aspley—ALP) (3.22 p.m.): I always feel humbled to speak after the member for Bulimba has spoken, because he has such expertise in housing. However, I agree with him when he said that homes should be built on strong foundations. Whilst, unlike him, I cannot quote Scripture, I can do my bit by rising to support the Architects Bill and the Professional Engineers Bill.

**Mr Schwarten:** Give me a stone. Build on stone; don't build on sand.

**Ms BARRY:** I thank the minister. I have learned two things today.

**Mr Schwarten:** That's the biblical reference.

**Ms BARRY:** I thank the minister. Now I feel terrible that both the member for Bulimba and the minister can quote Scripture and I cannot.

In an electorate such as Aspley where many people use the services of architects and professional engineers, as their state MP can I say that it has been a real eye-opener to come face to face with home builders for whom their dream home has become a nightmare. Any legislation that provides for greater public confidence in the building industry is one to be supported and commended.

In particular, I wish to comment on those aspects of the bills that eliminate the requirements in the current legislation for the registration of companies. As noted by the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing in his second reading speech, due to the similarities in the state based legislation across Australia the Queensland Architects Act 1985 and other state and territory legislation were the subject of a national competition policy review carried out by the Commonwealth Productivity Commission. The outcome of the national competition policy review was to support the continued regulation of the profession and to seek the elimination of anti-competitive elements that cannot be justified on public interest grounds.

The Productivity Commission's primary recommendation was to deregulate the practice of architecture around Australia. The commission's secondary recommendation included a recommendation that only individual persons and not companies be required to be registered if the registration of architects was to continue. The commission found that inconsistencies between jurisdictions regarding company ownership and registration requirements generate unnecessary additional costs. Therefore the Architects Bill adopts the Productivity Commission's recommendation that only individual architects be registered.

For consistency, a similar approach has been adopted in the Professional Engineers Bill. The end result of the national competition policy process is that the Architects Bill and the Professional Engineers Bill have both eliminated all corporate registration requirements. Under the new bills, only individual architects and professional engineers will be registered. However, the bill contains provisions requiring offices to be staffed with registered persons and other measures to enhance consumer protection in dealing with architects and engineers.

The bills ensure that architectural and engineering services are provided in a competent and professional way by promoting the philosophy that only individuals as opposed to organisations are registered. After all, it is the individuals who are required to establish their suitability for registration and who are to be responsible for the delivery of professional services and who ought to be, in the case of poor work, subject to disciplinary action if the standard of service falls below the defined standard. This

will lead to ensuring that service is commensurate with national and international standards of practice. Whilst only individuals are to be registered, that does not preclude each board from maintaining a list of the organisations that offer architectural and engineering services or, indeed, making that list available to the public as a public interest activity.

The bill retains a strong and competitive registration scheme for architects and professional engineers whilst removing business registration and business ownership requirements that have not been justified as being in the public interest. The bill places emphasis on the responsibility of individual architects and engineers to provide services and removes the red tape associated with company registration requirements. I note that the Queensland Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and the Institute of Engineers Australia—Queensland Division have expressed support for the bill. I congratulate the minister and his staff on all their work and I commend the bill to the House.