



Speech by

Hon. Robert Swarten

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Hansard Tuesday, 19 May 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Building Services Authority

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology) (10.26 am): Recently, there have been a number of media reports in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay questioning what the Queensland Building Services Authority is doing to assist consumers and contractors in the industry. These reports included comments from the honourable members for Burnett and Bundaberg, which were strongly critical of the Building Services Authority.

On 22 April, I informed the House of a number of initiatives being undertaken by the BSA to educate contractors in the industry. Clearly, those honourable members did not bother to listen. For the record, neither of those members has ever bothered to contact the BSA to raise their concerns. Nor could the Jim Carrey and Jeff Daniels of the Burnett be bothered to join their constituents in attending the BSA seminars which were held in their area. The last seminar in the area was held on 13 May in Hervey Bay. That is just last week. Again, they were too lazy to get out of their own road to go.

It would have been pleasing to read some comments from them whereby they encouraged their contractor constituents to attend these seminars, but, alas, no such thing happened. On 3 June a BSA contractor and consumer seminar will be held in Bundaberg at Brothers Leagues Club. I invite you to invite your constituents to go along.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: If you had attended you would not have made the ill-informed, ridiculous comments that you did.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw, Mr Speaker. If the honourable members had bothered to attend they would not have made the ill-informed, ridiculous comments they did. I would also encourage the honourable members—

Mr MESSENGER: I rise to a point of order. I find those remarks insulting and offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, the honourable gentleman has found the remarks insulting. I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw if I have offended the honourable member. Everyone in this House knows that these are tough economic times and it is—

Mr Messenger: How many times have I written to you, Robbie?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I am not insulted by that term, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: The dignity of the House, honourable member for Burnett, is not improved by referring to the honourable member other than by his correct title.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Everyone in this House knows that these are tough economic times and it is inevitable that some building businesses will fail, but the BSA is doing everything in its power to save contractors and help consumers. To protect consumers, we have the statutory Home Warranty Insurance Scheme that protects homeowners when their builder fails. Similarly, for contractors and subcontractors in dispute over payment, we have the Building and Construction Industry Payments Act 2004. This tough legislation gives the aggrieved party the opportunity to have the dispute adjudicated fairly and cost-effectively.

I might point out to this parliament that whenever this legislation has been presented every single member of this parliament has supported it wholeheartedly without amendment. The reality is that every member of this parliament is well aware, or should be well aware, of just what strength of legislation the BSA has in this state. The construction industry in this state is the strongest and most regulated industry anywhere in this country, anywhere in the world and, up until last week, enjoyed the bipartisan support of this parliament. Unfortunately, that has now gone by the wayside.

The Leader of the Opposition has a challenge here, and that is to either come up with better ideas—something which the opposition would know that I would welcome, as those honourable members who have shadowed me would know—but, more importantly, to pull these honourable members into line when they attack on an unfounded basis the good work of the Building Services Authority. For the information of these honourable members, I table a DVD which they may be able to get someone to produce for them and interpret for them.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'BSA's Major Works Contract Kit' November 2008 [\[209\]](#).

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Building Contracts: Know your contractual rights' [\[210\]](#).

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Helping Queensland Build Better' [\[211\]](#).

Tabled paper: Document titled 'The Building Game: How to survive it in challenging times' [\[212\]](#).

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Facts for Home Builders & Renovators—Edition Five—March 2008' [\[213\]](#).

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Building and Construction Industry Payments Agency: Get paid quicker!' [\[214\]](#)

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Facts for Licensees: A quick guide to the rights and responsibilities of BSA licence holders.' [\[215\]](#).

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Domestic Building Contracts Act 2000: What contractors need to know: Edition 7—February 2009' [\[216\]](#).

Tabled paper: Contractor Education SuperShow—2 DVD Set [\[217\]](#).