




Speech by

Hon. Desley Boyle

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

Hansard Thursday, 16 February 2012

BUILDING BOOST GRANT AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (12.03 pm): What a joke this opposition is. Opposition members come in and make these long speeches with selective quotations of statistics and say what a failure in social policy the Building Boost is but, yes, they will be supporting it. What hypocrites.

Another example of their hypocrisy is that several of those opposition members who have spoken this morning about the Building Boost and its supposed failure were also members of the committee which examined this bill, as indeed I am. That committee invited expert organisations and key stakeholders to appear, like the UDIA, Master Builders, the Property Council of Australia and the HIA. These opposition members sat there and asked for their expertise and made admiring noises about how wonderful it was to have the benefit of their expertise, but now they have come into this House this morning and argued and stated their own opinions, which are entirely opposed to the expertise that was presented to the committee from these worthy stakeholders. The expertise and views from those eminent organisations were well summed up in a letter jointly signed by the HIA, the PCA, the MBA and the UDIA which said, 'The Queensland Building Boost has played an important part in generating this increased level of activity across the industry.' That is the bottom line. We have already received some 5,500 applications and 3,500 have been approved.

The other amazing thing to me, as the member for Cairns, was that the opposition again showed their ignorance of what happens outside the south-east corner. Not only does the aspiring Premier, Campbell Newman, believe Bowen to be north of Cairns; opposition members have either ignored or been ignorant of the boost provided in Cairns and Far North Queensland by the Building Boost bill, the comments that have been printed by industry stakeholders in the *Cairns Post* as well as the actuality of the ABS figures on building approval increases in recent months in the Far North Queensland region.

In fact, the opposition spokesman on treasury matters, the member for Clayfield, quoted statistics to demonstrate that there had been no boost up to October last year. He did not mention what happened in November and December. I am pleased to say that there was a significant increase in building approvals in Far North Queensland in November, particularly in the urban area councils. They rose to 77. In December, they rose again by 45 per cent, compared to the figures from November and December 2010. The truth is that the only cranes on the skyline in Cairns city during last year and the year before were on state government funded projects. I am pleased to say that in the early months of this year we have had announcements of various private sector projects that are getting underway. Confidence is returning. The housing industry tells us that, while the workloads are uneven and some businesses are not yet doing well, there are some businesses reporting good, solid work. This extension to the Building Boost will assist that without a doubt.

I have heard some figures about the take-up of the Building Boost grant region by region. In my region, it is around six per cent of those who have been approved and those who have applied. That is roughly the population of Cairns as compared to the state population so it is appropriate. I am disappointed that it is not higher and that we are not getting a bigger and fairer share of the Building Boost, so I will work hard over the ensuing month or so, while I remain the member for Cairns, to make sure that the good news about the extension of the Building Boost travels far and wide. That will hopefully increase the number of applications and eventual approvals and make sure that the Building Boost is well used.

I want to mention the tremendous support we have had on this matter, as well as on all construction issues for the industry's sake, by the MBA in Cairns which is so ably led by Mr Ron Bannah. At all stages, he has been very forthright with the government, with other stakeholders and in the media. He has been a strong and hardworking advocate for the construction industry. I do thank him for his support on numbers of matters during my term as the member for Cairns but particularly for his encouragement and support for the Building Boost grant and its benefits for Far North Queensland.