




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

QUEENSLAND BUILDING SERVICES AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (4.26 pm): I rise to add in a small way to the debate on the Queensland Building Services Authority Amendment Bill 2013. I welcome the opportunity to speak on this bill and to support the amendments that it contains. I start by thanking the chair of the committee, the member for Warrego, and the members of his committee for their consideration of the bill and its previous inquiry. The building and construction industry as we all know is one of the LNP's four pillars, along with tourism, agriculture and resources. This LNP government is committed to putting the right framework in place to allow it to continue and drive growth in our state.

In theory the QBSA should have worked. It was interesting to listen earlier in the day to the contribution from the member for Rockhampton when he said that the QBSA was, in fact, a creature of his side of politics. That explained a few things to me. As I move around my electorate, as I talk to the builders, the homeowners and the people in the marketplace, they tell me over and over again that the QBSA was a bloated bureaucracy, that it was slow to react, that it seemed unable to help and did not seem to work and that people had lost faith in it. What does that sound like? It sounds like the Labor Party. People have lost faith in it.

I will give a bit of background to this bill. On 2 August 2012 the Legislative Assembly asked the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee to inquire into and report on the operation and performance of the Queensland Building Services Authority or, as we know it, the QBSA. There was extensive consultation with stakeholders. I understand there were 109-odd submissions put into that inquiry from builders, homeowners and those people doing renovations. In fact, I have just done a bit of renovation myself. Over Christmas I put in a new kitchen. I did sign a BSA contract thinking that that covered me for everything. Luckily I had a very good experience with a local Burleigh kitchen company so everything went smoothly. I am very happy about that.

The committee heard that in 2011 and 2012 there were, in fact, 73,256 insurable building contracts issued, similar to the contract that I signed when I did my kitchen. With 4,726 complaints received about those particular contracts, the QBSA actually issued 896 directions to rectify. Having conducted the inquiry, the committee tabled its report No. 14 on 30 November 2012. The report contained 41 recommendations. On 29 May the minister gave the Queensland government's formal response to those 41 recommendations and agreed to implement the majority of the reforms as they were recommended. As we have heard from many members who have spoken about this particular bill, the government's response was to come up with a 10-point action plan. This bill implements the first two points of that 10-point action plan, which is to establish the Queensland Building and Construction Commission—the QBCC—to replace the Queensland Building Services Authority. That will facilitate the biggest reforms in Queensland's building industry regulations in over two decades and it will ensure that Queenslanders have the best building regulator in the country.

The new commission will have a professional governing body and a commissioner who will be appointed by and report to the governing board. Doesn't that make sense? The board of the QBCC will set the strategic direction and the operational, financial and administrative policies of the commission. It will report directly to the minister on matters of performance and on issues affecting

the building industry and consumers. Points 3 to 10 in the minister's action plan contain a raft of other measures including early intervention in the disputes process; improved accountability of the certification of building work; possible changes to the scope of the home warranty insurance scheme; improved consumer awareness in industry training; a review of the professional development, licensing and compliance of contractors; and an expanded licensing role of the commission. I understand that those remaining actions will be implemented progressively by the new commission in consultation with the industry and the stakeholders.

It is very refreshing to hear that a government is consulting with the industry and the stakeholders, because we all know that the previous failed Labor government was not very good at consulting. In fact, they did not seem to understand the concept in any fashion. Ultimately, the best outcome for everyone is that there will be fewer disputes, fewer cases going to QCAT and faster resolutions to the disputes that do in fact arise. The bill has had input from key stakeholders, including the Master Builders Association, the Australian Institute of Building and the HIA. A branch of the HIA is located in my electorate on the Gold Coast. I have spent a lot of time talking to Colin Buttenshaw and Morgan Rick, the HIA business development officer, about their particular issues with the QBSA. The HIA wanted us to go further with these reforms, but they are quite content with the minister's program for moving forward. They will sit back, watch and see what happens. They have a great deal of enthusiasm for this particular bill, because the bill will ensure an even playing field for all players: consumers and contractors alike. As I said before, as I move around my electorate I talk to a lot of people. I go down to the markets and I sit on the esplanade of a Friday morning and I talk to a lot of people. I know that a lot of people were very concerned about the BSA. The amendments that we make today will put those worries to rest.

I commend the Minister for Housing and Public Works and member for Everton for bringing this bill forward. I also commend the last housing and public works minister, the member for Moggill, for instigating that inquiry initially. I commend the minister's staff for the effort that they put into this particular bill. I commend the bill to the House.