




Speech By  
**Hon. Tim Mander**

**MEMBER FOR EVERTON**

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**QUEENSLAND BUILDING SERVICES AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL**

**Introduction**

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (3.41 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991 to replace the Queensland Building Services Authority with a new commission, and to make consequential or minor amendments of the Building Act 1975 and the acts as stated in schedule 1 for related purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Building Services Authority Amendment Bill 2013 [\[2833\]](#).

*Table paper:* Queensland Building Services Authority Amendment Bill 2013, explanatory notes [\[2834\]](#).

The building and construction industry is one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy, and this government is committed to putting the right framework in place to allow it to continue to drive growth in our state. This bill facilitates the biggest reform of building industry regulations in more than two decades and will ensure that Queenslanders have the best building regulator in the country. The aim is to strike the right balance between consumers and contractors. It is about building confidence in the industry, whether that is confidence to build a new home or renovate an existing one, or the confidence to start or grow a business or pursue a career in the industry.

In August 2012, this parliament agreed to a motion that the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee inquire into and report on the operation and performance of the Queensland Building Services Authority. On 30 November 2012, the parliamentary committee tabled in the Legislative Assembly its report recommending far-reaching changes to the Queensland Building Services Authority. My department then appointed a panel of three experts to fully assess the recommendations of the parliamentary committee. I thank those panel members—Mr Phil Kesby, Mr Andrew Wallace and Mr David Hanna—and the director-general of my department, Mr Neil Castles, for their valuable assistance in developing the government's response.

The government response, which was tabled on 29 May 2013, includes a 10-point action plan to overhaul building regulation in this state. This bill today sets in motion points 1 and 2 of the action plan, which will see us establish the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, QBCC, in place of the Queensland Building Services Authority. The new commission will have a professional governing board and a commissioner who will be appointed by, and report to, the governing board. The board of the QBCC will set the strategic direction and the operational, financial and administrative policies of the commission. It will report to me directly on matters of performance and on issues affecting the building industry and consumers.

This is a significant departure from the system used by the Building Services Authority, where the board served in a purely advisory capacity with no real authority. The board will also ensure that the commission performs its functions and exercises its powers in a proper, effective and efficient

way, making and reviewing policies governing the administration of the act, providing guidance and leadership to the commissioner, and advising me about unfair trading practices affecting the security of payments to subcontractors.

There will be seven members of the board, including a chair and a deputy chair, appointed by the Governor in Council for a term of not more than three years. The commissioner will not be a member of the board. Board positions will be advertised following the passage of this bill, with members to be selected on the basis of their relevant expertise and experience as a member of a governing board. The commissioner will be appointed by the board, subject to my approval, for a term of not more than three years, with the role being akin to that of a chief executive. General managers will be responsible for each of the three main business units, those being licensing, dispute resolution and the home warranty scheme, with these units being firewalled from each other to prevent any potential conflict of interest.

As the responsible minister, I will have the power to give formal directions to the commission. These are to be tabled in parliament. Any formal policies of the board governing the administration of the act will need to be endorsed by me as part of the approval process by the Governor in Council, as these policies are required to be approved by a regulation.

As I mentioned earlier, this bill is only the start. Points 3 to 10 of the action plan contain a raft of other measures, including: early intervention in the dispute process; improved accountability of the certification of building work; possible changes to the scope of the Home Warranty Insurance Scheme; improved consumer awareness and industry training; a review of the professional development, licensing and compliance for contractors; and expanded licensing role of the commission. These changes will be implemented progressively by the new commission in consultation with industry and stakeholders. Ultimately we want to see fewer disputes, fewer cases going to QCAT and faster resolution of those disputes that do arise.

The building and construction industry is one of the pillars of our economy, and it is important that we make sure that there is a level playing field for all participants, whether consumers or contractors. The reforms set in motion by this bill are an important step towards making sure that the building industry can continue to drive growth in our state. I commend the bill to the House.

### **First Reading**

**Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (3.46 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### **Referral to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee.