




Speech By
Hon. Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Building and Construction Commission

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (9.52 am): The Newman government has been committed to revitalising front-line services. One of the areas in which we have been doing that is building regulation. This year we saw the creation of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. One of our aims has been to reduce the number of disputes that take place in the building and construction industry but also deal in the shortest possible time frame with those disputes that inevitably will happen.

One of the great reforms that have been introduced is the early dispute resolution service. Disputes can go on and on and on, costing money and causing a great deal of angst. We want to be able to reduce that. Some of the early trials of the early dispute resolution process have been incredibly encouraging. Whereas in the past people automatically had to go to QCAT or the building regulator could not intervene while the contract was in place, we have brought in new reforms to allow early dispute resolution to take place. By using this service, people's disputes are now being resolved on average in 15 days, compared to an average of 28 weeks with QCAT. What an incredible improvement—a great reduction in cost and a great reduction in angst.

The QBCC has also become far more customer oriented—the customer being the next person they are dealing with, whether it is a consumer or a building contractor. We have designed a new customer-friendly website. That has been designed by contractors and consumers for contractors and consumers. Almost 70 per cent of the information is accessible within two clicks and 100 per cent of the information is accessible within three clicks. We have introduced a new 24/7 telephone service. Of course, the building and construction industry is very active on the weekends. People are out viewing their homes on the weekends. The new 24/7 telephone service means that people can call whenever it suits them. Calls are answered by a customer service operator within 30 seconds, and that call will be dealt with on the spot or transferred to a specialist for further assistance. To date we have received more than 2,000 calls outside of normal business hours.

We also are committed to consumer education, so the QBCC has created a number of consumer education videos that star popular TV personalities Tom Williams and Liz Cantor. The videos guide consumers through the entire building process, from selecting a block of land to choosing a builder and what to do when their home nears completion. This video series is available for viewing on the QBCC's YouTube channel and the QBCC website.

Finally, I will talk about some of the legislative reforms that were brought in to make it easier for contractors. It now will be an offence for contractors not to pay their subbies, and there will be consequences for that. We have brought in new minimum financial requirements. This has cut a lot of red tape and is saving licensees thousands of dollars each year. We are also bringing in three-yearly licence renewals, which will mean a 17 per cent discount for contractors—again, reducing cost. This government is committed to revitalising front-line services and we are doing it with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission.