




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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PLUMBING AND DRAINAGE BILL

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (11.16 am): I rise to make a brief contribution on the Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2018. I start by saying the LNP's position is to not oppose the bill. That follows a lengthy review which established the need to modernise the language and structure within the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002 to better reflect those industry and community expectations. I note that there has been lengthy debate on this; it has gone on for some time. It is the clear view of the industry that this needs to occur. The LNP will not be opposing the bill; we will be allowing it to be facilitated.

The bill seeks to deliver a consistent penalty framework. In this regard, penalties for unlicensed plumbing work and for offences that endanger public health and safety have been increased. We see that as a notable cause for the bill. It also amends the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act to establish a new licence to regulate mechanical services—that is for both heating and cooling units—and medical gas work in large or public buildings where incorrect installation can have fatal consequences. Indeed it can, and we talk about some of the potential for disease due to getting this wrong. This is something that we need to ensure is facilitated in the correct manner.

While acknowledging that an overhaul of the legislative framework to improve and modernise the legislation is a worthy undertaking, we do express some concern. I must acknowledge the committee chairman, who has ensured that there is comprehensive debate on this, as have the deputy chair and the members of that committee. Even after that process, we expressed concern that there still appears to be a level of confusion within sectors of the industry about how things will work under the new arrangements. I would have hoped that that level of confusion would not have existed by this point in time.

As I said, there was more than enough time for industry to be engaged. Whilst the comments of industry have been heated on some fronts, I do say that to still have that air of uncertainty around it is in my mind disappointing and could have been avoided. It is noted that the proposed new mechanical services licence was initially based on the Victorian mechanical services licensing model, but in response to stakeholders' feedback about applying that model the mechanical services class was refined, although this still implies some questions over the proposed approach.

It is noted with concern that the proposal allows transitional arrangements to be handled by regulation—that is clause 174—wherein it is stated that this is intended to be a temporary measure to facilitate a smooth transition to the new legislative scheme by enabling the regulation to be made to 'address any emerging or unforeseen issues.' The subject matter of any regulation under this clause appears broad and free-ranging and is therefore potentially open to abuse. Whenever we are implementing legislation in this House I would hope that, wherever possible, we are able to remove uncertainty and the potential for laws to be abused. That is a concern we certainly have. Subsequent to the change of government in 2015 it appears that the Plumbing and Drainage Act was never amended to affect that change. That could see hundreds of plumbers having their licences lapse, and we have questions concerning liability in that regard.

Our position is that we do not oppose this bill. The lengthy nature of the review means that some issues have been taken on board; however, we stress that this could have been done in a more precise manner to remove some of the ambiguities. Overall, the LNP will not oppose this bill.