




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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PLUMBING AND DRAINAGE BILL

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (11.21 am): I rise this morning to make a brief contribution to the Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2018. It would be remiss of me not to reflect on my time on the committee during the last term of government when this proposed legislation was first presented to the House but unfortunately lapsed as a result of the election. I note that fundamentally this bill simply seeks to repeal the Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2002 and replace it with a new, modernised and improved bill of 2018 which is intended to reflect the changing regulatory environment and modernise some of the language within the legislation.

While we will not be opposing the bill, we do have a couple of concerns. Before I address those concerns I should highlight the fact that some of the major changes in the bill recognise the need to tighten up the regulation around the installation of medical gas facilities, also to take into consideration specific needs around legionella in commercial air-conditioning systems. Earlier in the last government a report came to the House. There were changes as far back as then when we looked specifically at the issue of legionella. It is a dangerous condition that we are all aware of, but some of the presentations that came to the committee were interesting regarding things as simple as pressure valves that are installed in water systems that feed air-conditioning systems.

We had evidence presented to the committee on one occasion about ice-making machines. While most ice-making machines are compliant and there is no need for general concern, there were a number of imported machines that were identified as having specific issues. One of the main water lines was located quite close to the compressor, which meant that water that should not have been heated prior to being frozen for ice was being warmed up. It is important that we have rigorous rules in place and that we have tight, modern legislation to address the many health and welfare concerns that Queenslanders should have around plumbing.

I do note that in the committee's report there were concerns expressed about WaterMark products. One of the concerns, which I believe the shadow minister will raise later, relates to the proposal that future provisions be dealt with through regulation rather than legislation. My concern always is that, if it is not legislated, then it is open slather for the minister of the day to make whatever changes he would like. I want to put on the record the concerns that were raised by a number of industry groups, including the plumbing union. I will read from the report, which states—

It should be noted that industry stakeholders, including MBQ, HIA, MPAQ, Plumbing Union and Services Trades College Australia, at the committee's public hearing were in agreement with their concerns regarding bathroom PODs.

For those of you who do not know what a bathroom pod is, it is becoming common practice to prefabricate an entire bathroom module overseas and then import that completed module into Australia. The concern is that the fittings or the layout of fittings within those bathroom pods may not comply with the standards that we have set here in Queensland. I know from past committee hearings—and I am sure it would have been raised again in these committee hearings—that on a number of occasions there has been a need for plumbers to go in and effectively retrofit those pods. It is appropriate that those concerns be noted. It is also appropriate to flag the industry's concern about it being regulated rather than dealt with succinctly and clearly within the current legislation.

The legislation is significant in that it does completely overhaul the old plumbing act. This is a brand-new act that will repeal the old act in its entirety. We are not planning to oppose the legislation; however, it was noted by those of us on this side of the House that the process was a little rushed and that the legislation was not given enough time to run the full course of hearings that should have been extended across the state to really get right down into all of the detail.

I note also there were concerns expressed in the statement of reservation about sunset clauses. The Queensland Law Society also expressed concern that the problem with sunset clauses is they leave things a little bit open-ended and create uncertainty. This is probably a little bit like some of the reviews and provisions we saw in the minister's Building Industry Fairness Bill around subcontractor payments. The typical thing that we hear from the government's side of the House is, 'Trust us, we're going to review this.' What we have seen is review after review. Some of the legislation that has come before the House does not necessarily provide the certainty that industry requires. I think that I am well and truly on the record in the past as expressing concern around the shiny baubles we have seen the government offer the building and construction industry in Queensland.

We will be supporting the bill, and I look forward to hearing further from the minister on some of the proposed amendments to deal with our concerns.