




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 27 February 2019

MOTION

Building and Construction Industry

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.31 pm): This motion was moved by the housing minister and he could not even take his whole five minutes to speak to it. We see from this Labor government openness, accountability, arrogance and cowardice. Under the watch of the Palaszczuk government, 50 building companies have fallen over. Under the watch of the Premier of Queensland and this incompetent housing minister, 7,000 subcontractors have fallen over. That is half a billion dollars. What is the minister's solution? He definitely wants to blame the member for Everton, but he is certainly blaming Canberra.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my right, the minister was not taking interjections and I made that clear to the opposition. In this case, I do not believe that the Leader of the Opposition is taking interjections. I ask you to make your contribution at the appropriate time.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Subcontractors are sick of the political blame game. It is obvious that the Minister for Housing and the Premier in this state have been caught out. That is why the LNP is calling for a commission of inquiry into the building industry. We know that subcontractors are the backbone of this great state. They provide employment. We know that, under the Palaszczuk Labor government, the building industry has gone from bad to worse.

The LNP's policy for a commission of inquiry is the right platform to deliver this change. We know that the current system is broken. We know how many building companies have fallen over. We know how many subcontractors are hurting. We also know that many hardworking subcontractors are not being paid when they deserve to be paid. A commission of inquiry would have the same powers as a royal commission. We need those powers to get to the bottom of these dodgy practices.

We know that there is no easy fix, but a royal commission will allow people, allow subcontractors, to tell their story. We need to hear from the operators of building companies who have gone bust. We need to nail Queensland's crooked operators. We need to know how they got away with it and we need to know who has helped them.

This inquiry is more than just probing the underpayment of subcontractors. We also know that senior government officials, or senior government figures, were warned of major collapses and they failed to act. The public deserves to know who knew what and when they knew that and what those on the benches opposite in this House knew. The education department and the health department continue to hand out contracts to high-risk builders only for them to collapse.

Mr Mander: Disgraceful.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It is disgraceful. We know that some of those building companies had been suspended by the QBCC. Complaints about financial records that had been forwarded to police and ASIC simply went nowhere.

Not a single major building company has been prosecuted by the Palaszczuk Labor government. Those opposite appear to see nothing, do nothing and hear nothing—unless it is coming from the union movement.

As usual, we have heard a lot of talk from Labor, but we have seen no action. Our subcontractors deserve a government that will stand shoulder to shoulder with them and protect their families and their employees. All they get from those opposite is more talk and no action.

The buck stops with this Premier. In 2015, the Premier promised the world and, once again, she failed to deliver. We have seen that in the health area, which we spoke about in this House yesterday. We know that the Premier has failed the building industry. We need only to look at the 5,000 jobs that have been lost in the construction industry under the Premier of Queensland in the past 12 months. I am surprised that the Treasurer of this state has not told people involved in the building industry that they need to reskill. We have heard that with regard to workers in the resources industry. The LNP will continue to take up this fight until the next election, because the building industry deserves—

(Time expired)