




Speech By
Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 27 February 2019

MOTION

Building and Construction Industry

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (4.36 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the honourable Minister de Brenni. The Palaszczuk government knows that, in order for Queenslanders to have secure, stable and well-paid jobs, the industry they work in must be fair, safe and sustainable. It is not unreasonable to expect that, when people do a job, when they deliver a service, they should get paid. For subcontractors in the building and construction industry, that is often not the case.

Queensland's \$46.6 billion building and construction industry is the state's third largest employer with 230,000 employees. It is an industry that needs confidence and certainty of work. When dodgy bosses and shady operators start to withhold payments, it can have serious consequences. The Palaszczuk government's building industry fairness reforms represent the strongest regime in the country to crack down on this practice. We have given the Queensland Building and Construction Commission the powers to investigate, to drill down and uncover the truth. We have done this to protect Queensland jobs and to bring confidence to investment and buildings such as those being built on the Gold Coast.

If licensees do the wrong thing or fail to pay, our message to them is, 'We will track you down and we will hold you to account.' We have given the QBCC a direct line of sight to companies that may be in trouble. New powers under the QBCC Act provide far-reaching powers of entry, search and seizure. We will now have the evidence that the police require to commence proceedings under the Criminal Code and act rather than having a system that relied on a 'trust the big end of town' approach taken by the LNP.

So many of my constituents have found themselves without pay from dodgy companies. Bernard Moolman, the director of a Nerang company, Ozzie Electrical and Solar, was left \$88,000 out of pocket and had to let go 30 staff after he was left empty-handed following the collapse of the Cullen Group. The Gold Coast community is continually let down by its wall-to-wall LNP representation. In no other industry is that clearer than the building industry. Under pressure from Labor and subcontractors, the federal LNP government commissioned the Murray report, which backed the Queensland model of project bank accounts as the best way to ensure that subcontractors get paid. The Morrison government has failed to act. It is more bothered about avoiding questions about its dodgy deals than protecting Queensland workers.

Subbies are literally building Queensland and the Gold Coast, which is why subbies across Queensland were cheering yesterday at Bill Shorten's announcement that a federal Labor government would back in Queensland's building industry fairness reforms to ensure that all Queenslanders get paid in full, on time, every time. Clearly we have done a lot of work and having a federal Labor government that also has Commonwealth project bank accounts, tackles phoenixing and properly funds ASIC will be another step towards ensuring our subcontractors have justice.

I will always stand up for subcontractors. I spoke in this House during my first speech about the need for subbies to get paid. It is interesting to see that the LNP has finally broken its silence on this issue. I do not know where those opposite were when subbies were crying out for reform when the Newman government was in power. It will be very interesting to see if they continue their support in the future. I support the minister's motion.