




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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MOTION

Building and Construction Industry

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.40 pm): The first thing I want to do is sympathise with the public servants of the Department of Housing and Public Works who have to put up with this incompetent minister. My office has been inundated with calls from public servants who wish I was still the minister. Let me state the history as it really was. When we came into government the BSA was a basket case that had for years been led by, ironically, Robert Schwarten. Everywhere we went we heard people complain about how incompetent the BSA was and how they wanted reform. We commenced a parliamentary inquiry that went for the first 12 months of our term. When that inquiry finished we came up with a comprehensive plan to totally overhaul the BSA and came up with the QBCC. We created an organisation that had teeth. We appointed a commissioner from New South Wales who had, by the way, investigative experience as well, who was determined to put a cleaner through this system. We increased the penalties for those contractors who would not pay their subcontractors. We made it an offence.

These laws did not come in until October 2014 at the end of our term. We handed this new government a framework. It had an organisation that had teeth and it did nothing. The minister whinges about some of the changes that we made. If they were so damaging why has it taken them four years to do anything about it? What the minister is saying is an absolute load of rubbish. This government has been sitting on its hands. It is disgraceful that this minister has given subcontractors false hope. He has promised the world and delivered nothing. We have already heard the opposition leader say that over \$500 million has not been paid to subbies under this minister's watch. This government may be able to get away with giving false hope for one election, but it will not get away with it for two elections.

There are issues in the building and construction industry and we need to do something more than has been done. The only answer is to have a commission of inquiry, one with the powers of a royal commission that has teeth and authority, so that we can get to the bottom of these issues. The people who were the architects of the failure of the BSA are now running the show. Robert Schwarten is back on the board, along with Dick Williams and Jade Ingham from the CFMMEU. How could a union thug be on the regulator? It is absolutely ridiculous and is treating these people with contempt.

As I said earlier, a full and comprehensive overhaul of the BSA took place. The QBCC came into effect at the end of our term. Unfortunately we lost the election three months later. We handed this government an organisation that could do something, with a commissioner who had the commitment to do something and it has done nothing whatsoever. All it has done is given false hope and promises. Contractors are falling over too regularly and this government is doing nothing about it. The only solution is a full commission of inquiry. The government will have our full support if it brings that before the House because subcontractors deserve to be paid. They do not need false promises from this minister.