




Speech By
Brent Mickelberg

MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

Record of Proceedings, 15 July 2020

**BUILDING INDUSTRY FAIRNESS (SECURITY OF PAYMENT) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (12.45 pm): I rise to speak on the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. This bill is the latest ALP attempt to address concerns around fraudulent behaviour in the building and construction industry. As stated by my colleagues today, the LNP's position is clear: every Queenslander deserves to be paid for the work that they do; a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. However, it is clear that the longstanding issues in relation to subcontractors not being paid and fraudulent behaviour have not been resolved to date. Since being elected in 2017 I have been approached by a number of local electricians, plumbers and other subcontractors looking for help to resolve instances of unacceptable behaviour and alleged insolvent trading.

For my constituents Steve and Gina Atkins, Minister de Brenni's inability to address that issue means that they are now owed more than \$120,000 and are being pursued by liquidators in relation to payments made to them by a collapsed builder who was allegedly trading while insolvent. Mr and Mrs Atkins feel let down by the Palaszczuk Labor government, the building industry task force and the QBCC. Perhaps most disappointingly, after writing to the government in early April, my constituents are yet to receive from Minister de Brenni a response addressing their concerns.

Actions speak louder than words, so it is easy to understand why many Queenslanders have no confidence in the Palaszczuk Labor government to look out for the interests of tradies and other subcontractors. It is time for the minister to take action because, so far, all we have had is talk. In 2017 the minister said that the legislation he introduced then would result in an era of fairness in the building and construction industry, but the evidence suggests otherwise.

I note that the LNP will not be opposing this bill. However, we have considerable concerns in relation to a number of aspects of the bill. Given the consistent examples of non-payment issues, fraudulent practices, false statutory declarations, illegal phoenixing activity and company collapses endemic within the industry, the LNP has called for a commission of inquiry into the building and construction industry. The joint task force has not adequately addressed all of those concerns, given its narrow terms of reference and the tight time frame for the full investigation to be completed. As a consequence, the LNP has committed to a commission of inquiry should we gain office in a little over three months.

The objectives of this bill are sound and that is why we will not be opposing it, but unfortunately, as we have seen so many times over the past five years, this Labor state government's response to the issue has been to create a burdensome and complex mess of red tape that does not resolve the issue that it seeks to address. Therefore, my message to the minister is simple: if you want to restore faith and trust in the building industry, you need to listen to the genuine concerns of people. It is unacceptable that the very contractors this bill seeks to protect have been waiting more than three and a half months for a response that addresses an issue directly related to the bill.