




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

Record of Proceedings, 15 July 2020

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

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill before us. Just to follow up on a couple of points raised by the member for Broadwater, I want to caution the other side. When I hear them say that we need to get rid of red tape and get rid of administrative burden, I hear them saying, 'We need to get rid of protections for working Queenslanders.' I just remind them that that is what Queenslanders hear sometimes when they say that. If those opposite do stand for the principle of a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, then I look forward to them supporting wholeheartedly the stolen wages legislation that the Minister for Industrial Relations has just introduced.

It is important to say that it is a timely moment that we are debating this bill because we are launching the unite and recover plan for Queensland, and this is one plan that will create more jobs in this time when we are under such economic stress. It will bring forward investment in infrastructure in Queensland and it will support many different Queensland industries, and that includes the construction and building industry. The construction industry will be a crucial part of the unite and recover plan in Queensland. For example, I point out the Works for Tradies program that will keep many skilled tradies in work—electricians, plumbers, builders, bricklayers, you name it—as they build 215 public housing properties throughout Queensland, and that is expected to keep 240 skilled tradespeople in work.

The unite and recover plan is about building a stronger Queensland, and this bill is about building a stronger Queensland as well. I want to commend the minister for this pursuit over many years of reform in this sector along security of payment. It has been quite a lengthy, sophisticated and thorough reform process that he has brought and that he has pursued. What is very clear is that this bill is part of that process, part of that reform that delivers security of payment to our subcontractors, to our builders and to our tradies. This bill says that it is not acceptable for them to live with non-payment or underpayment, it is not fair that our subbies have to bear the financial risk for many projects and it is not fair that their homes and their livelihoods and their marriages, as the member for Capalaba has noted, would be put under risk and under strain from non-payment. It is very clear, but we need to keep on saying it. What we need to see in Queensland is that subbies, contractors, builders and tradies being paid on time, every time and in full. This bill will build that confidence in the industry and, as the member for Capalaba and the minister have said, this part of the reform will create and support over 2,000 jobs. When you have that confidence, you can put on those people. That confidence allows tradies, builders and subbies to get on with their jobs. The confidence in this bill allows them to spend less time worrying and more time building.

This bill also continues the reforms that we have seen in our home park sector and our retirement park sector, and once again this is a reform that has been delivered continuously through hard work over many years by the Palaszczuk government. I once again commend the ministers. Minister Enoch and now Minister de Brenni have worked hard for many years on this particular issue. It is an issue that is close to my heart. I have thousands—literally thousands—of older Queenslanders living in these

villages in my area. I have many friends who live in these villages such as Pat McLoughin from Palm Lake in Deception Bay and Trevor and Veronica Andrew from Pacific Palms in Burpengary East. These issues are hugely important for them—that is, how their villages are run and how they get that access to fairness.

Through the reforms in this bill we have introduced fairness to how these villages are run. We have given the residents a voice, whether it be by empowering their committees to have a say on a rent rise issue or giving them, for the first time, a clear dispute process to resolve any issues. We have built transparency by making sure that we have a much fairer and more accountable rental increase process. That is hugely important.

This bill continues the reforms introduced in December 2019 when we brought in regulations to deal with significant changes in village operations such as closures, redevelopments and transitioning to a new operator. The amendments in this bill ensure that significant changes in village operations occur in a manner that is clear, orderly and fair. They do this by requiring the operator to prepare a plan for transition to a new operator, a village closure or a village redevelopment. What is very clear—and I have seen this for many years—is that the government is still working closely with our stakeholders to establish the form, the process and the regulations to implement these changes.

In conclusion, this bill keeps delivering on a range of reforms throughout the construction and building sector and the home parks and retirement villages sector in Queensland. It keeps building that confidence, it keeps building that strength in these sectors and it allows us to keep making life better for Queenslanders. It is important to have confidence in these sectors as we move through our unite and recover plan. I commend the bills to the House.