




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.48 pm): I support the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The question is: what is this bill really all about? What is at its heart? The answer is contained in the title of the bill: fairness. It is about fairness for subcontractors and fairness for small businesses. That is what Labor does. At the core of our values is fairness. We have seen that recently in our attempts to balance the scales, not just in this industry but also with the introduction of the Small Business Commissioner to ensure fairness for small retailers and hospitality businesses. Our small business adaptation grants give another example of the Palaszczuk Labor government trying to balance the scales and get fairness for small business.

The bill demonstrates something else that is very important, which is that ours is a government that listens to industry. Last week, Minister Shannon Fentiman and I had a great opportunity to visit Variety Living in Coorparoo and speak to Brenda. The business had received a small business adaptation grant. Fairly early on in the shut-down period, Brenda rang me and expressed the view that there needed to be some support for small businesses. I undertook to take that to the minister and I am pleased that we have rolled out those grants.

At the time I said to Brenda, 'There has to be something in this grant process so we are not simply handing money out to small businesses for basic bills. We have to somehow tie it to growing businesses and making businesses more robust, successful and capable of weathering the global pandemic.' Brenda said to me that she was actually glad that we went through a fairly rigorous process because she was now using this grant to grow her business and to employ more people. Similar to this bill, that is all the result of a government that listens to the sector.

At the core of this bill, as the member for Capalaba rightly pointed out, is confidence. When small business subcontractors know that they are going to get paid, when they know they are going to get paid on time and in full every time, they have confidence. They are able to do good cash flow management and they are able to do good business planning. When that occurs, businesses will grow and will continue to do that very important thing that small businesses do—that is, to employ people. That is exactly what we need at this time of a global pandemic.

I turn my attention briefly to the statement of reservation from the LNP. I had the opportunity to be a part of this committee for a short period of time while this bill was under consideration, so I participated in that. It is an area that I am very passionate about. I have seen the impacts of this in my electorate. I have seen what happens when things go wrong. I have seen the pressure that is put on people.

It was really interesting to read through the statement of reservation because, despite the opportunities that the LNP members were afforded to raise the concerns which they outline in the statement of reservation, none of those were raised during the committee process. I think we are seeing opposition for opposition's sake—going away and thinking, 'We have to say something negative about this,' but ultimately coming in here and supporting the bill.

The member for Burleigh pointed out in this speech that, in his view, this has taken too long. This is a continuation of work that we have already rolled out in the public sector. We have stopped. We have taken a check. We have listened to what the industry has had to say. We have listened to people at both the top and the bottom. We have done everything we can to get this right. We certainly do not apologise for listening to the industry, we certainly do not apologise for implementing industry-changing reforms, and we certainly do not apologise for taking the time, where there were things that were not foreseen, to get things right.

We are prepared to sit down with industry to listen to them to get things right. I am surprised that the member for Burleigh takes that view, because if he wanted to see the results of rushing and not listening he would only have to cast his mind back to the mercifully very short time that he was on the government side of the House to find numerous examples of what occurs when you rush legislation and do not listen.

The member for Burleigh will sit there, as the members on his side always do, and tell you that they can do it cheaper, they can do it better, they can do it faster—all sorts of wonderful things. The problem is that the public just do not believe them. When they go to the ballot box, they do not get those opportunities.

Those opposite always claim that they have thought of everything first. At least they are a step ahead of the Greens. On occasion they do think of things first: they thought of sacking people and cutting services first. They are at least ahead of the Greens. The Greens are constantly handing in Labor's homework, claiming it as their own and reckoning that they have invented it. Here is some homework that the Greens do not want handed in. I table two articles for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian* online, dated 25 June 2020, titled 'Greens defend taking "security cash" despite push for ban' [\[1173\]](#).

Tabled paper: Article from *In Queensland* online, dated 15 July 2020, titled 'Professional punter takes \$100,000 gamble on Queensland Greens' [\[1174\]](#).

The Greens, like all political parties, are happy to accept political donations, but, as they accept those donations, they run around condemning other parties for doing so and they claim some sort of moral high ground. It is a completely and utterly hypocritical thing to do.

Mr Mickelberg: Hear, hear!

Mr KELLY: It sounds like we are on a unity ticket there. I will take the interjection.

Mr Madden interjected.

Mr KELLY: I will take that one, too. I want to come back to the bill. At the core of this bill is the matter of fairness—fairness for subcontractors, fairness for small business—and only Labor is delivering that and only Labor will continue to deliver that. Just today we have had the Back to Work announcements, the expansion of Skilling Queenslanders for Work grant and the increases in free TAFE. All of this is designed to help small business and to help small business create jobs. Only Labor will deliver fairness for small business, and only Labor will deliver the support that small businesses need to create jobs as we unite and recover.