




Speech By
James Martin

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

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TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (3.06 pm): I rise today to speak to the Transport and Resources Committee's report No. 8, *Examination of Auditor-General report 16: 2019-20: Licensing builders and building trades*. As a new member of this place and a new member of the Transport and Resources Committee, I take this opportunity to thank the committee and in particular I thank the committee chair, the member for Kurwongbah, for his guidance and advice. Though I was not part of this examination, I look forward to working with him on future reports and inquiries.

The committee held public briefings with the Queensland Audit Office, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and the Department of Housing and Public Works. The report looked at the QBCC and how it regulates the building industry by issuing and managing licences in a fair and balanced way. The key point here is that the committee identified that the Queensland Building and Construction Commission is transitioning from a complaints-driven authority to a risk focused, insights-driven regulator. This is important, because the construction industry contributes so much to the Queensland economy. It employs over 230,000 Queenslanders, with around 91,000 licences. As we have heard from the minister many times, it contributes over \$47 billion to the Queensland economy. It provides many young Queenslanders with a great and rewarding career path in the building trades. It is great to see these young people on their way to work early every morning in the CBD on the many different projects that are underway.

Importantly, the Auditor-General's report found that the QBCC has effective processes and probity checks in place to assess whether licence applications meet requirements. I can also advise that the committee is satisfied that the QBCC is taking appropriate action to address the Auditor-General's recommendations.

It is important to note that the context in which the QBCC operates has changed over the years, with new technology and building products. Its role has changed significantly since its inception, with increased complexity and responsibility being introduced. The QBCC has needed to adapt in order to fulfil these additional responsibilities and is transitioning from a complaints-driven authority to a risk focused and insights-driven regulator. The Auditor-General's report has provided the QBCC with a range of recommendations that will assist in achieving its plan to complete this transition, and the committee agrees with the commissioner's comments that implementing the recommendations will also strengthen controls, improve planning and improve reporting.

The committee also agreed that the finalisation of this process should happen as soon as possible and, as such, the committee has agreed to continue to monitor the progress on finalisation of the audit recommendations and will report again if necessary. This move to a risk focused and insight-driven model will improve outcomes for consumers and it is good to see the QBCC working and keeping pace with changes in the industry, which, as we have heard, has become increasingly complex.

Queensland's building industry has never been stronger and I want to recognise the QBCC's role in that. Confidence in Queensland construction is high, with tradies and subbies confident that they will get paid for their work, home owners confident that they can invest in building and renovating and, importantly, confidence that the products on our construction sites are safe—with an independent regulator now holding everyone in the building supply chain accountable for ensuring products are safe and fit for their intended use to bank guarantees that provide security of payment. I want to thank and acknowledge Minister de Brenni and his staff in the department for their work in this space. Checks and balances on departments and statutory authorities like the QBCC are a vital part of our democracy and transparency of government. Like the committee chair and other members of the committee, I recommend that the Legislative Assembly note the report's contents.