



Speech By  
**Kim Richards**


**MEMBER FOR REDLANDS**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 October 2021

**MOTION**

**Queensland Building and Construction Commission**

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (5.26 pm): I rise to speak against the motion. I suggest that, as he was a member of the Newman government, possibly the member for Burnett has short-term memory loss. Talk about integrity! Honestly, for too long those opposite have undermined Queensland's construction sector. They do not just talk down those who work in it; they talk down those who regulate it. Very little has changed on that side of the House since the Newman government days. As the member said, you cannot rewrite history. They took a wrecking ball to the construction industry.

Let's talk about the department of housing and public works under the member for Everton in the Newman reign. There were sackings across that department which saw the loss of a massive procurement and delivery knowledge bank—deputy directors-general, general managers. It was unbelievable to watch it unfold. Then there is QBuild. Again, there was absolute decimation. There were 1,500 jobs lost and industry confidence was shattered. Honestly, it is absolute hypocrisy from that side of the House. Those opposite should be backing our construction industry and giving confidence to the sector, rather than continuing to diminish it.

Queensland's construction sector is an economic powerhouse. We on this side of the House continue to lead the nation. Queensland is the place to be. The Urban Developer reported last week that tradies will flock to Queensland, like many other southerners will, and this is because our Palaszczuk government has led the nation in the health response to COVID which has seen our successful economic recovery.

The construction sector contributes \$47 billion to the state's economy and continues to go from strength to strength during the pandemic. It is stronger, fairer and safer as a result of the reforms delivered by our Palaszczuk government in partnership with the industry and overseen by the regulator. Reforms include our nation-leading security-of-payment framework that ensures subbies get paid for the work they do—I know that many tradies in my area are grateful for this protection—and the nonconforming building products laws that ensure that building products are safe and fit for use. No-one ever wants to see a Grenfell Tower tragedy again. Other reforms include the minimum financial requirements that ensure the financial health of licensees so they can grow their businesses and employ more Queenslanders, giving confidence to the sector.

I note that the regulator plays a very important role in keeping our communities educated and informed on the pitfalls of the building and construction sector. Sadly, although to be expected, those opposite do not want to hear the truth and only seek to exploit individuals and their unfortunate circumstances for cheap political gain. Let us look at the facts. It was the LNP and the former minister for public works, the member for Everton, who weakened the minimum financial reporting laws. This left the regulator blind to the financial health of licensees, often until it was too late. When builders go bust, it is a nightmare not only for their clients but also for the subbies working for them. They did this under the guise of red-tape reduction. They pushed the risk down the chain to the subbies while simultaneously cutting the wages of subbies.

It was the Palaszczuk government that reinstated minimum financial reporting requirements because we know how important it is to ensure that builders have the capacity to meet the contracts of their clients. We reversed the reckless changes made by the LNP and reintroduced mandatory financial reporting for Queensland's largest licensees. The regulator now has a direct line of sight to companies that may be in trouble and would not be able to pay their subbies or suppliers.

The reinstatement of the minimum financial reporting requirements has resulted in an injection of \$1.4 billion of capital into the Queensland building and construction industry. This is a great result. It is a result that gives tradies and employees of licensees more certainty, better job stability and peace of mind. It means that companies are operating within the law and within the QBCC mandatory financial requirements. At the end of the day, they will get paid for the work they have done—a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

The Queensland construction sector is so strong and so is the regulator thanks to the Palaszczuk government. The sector has continued to grow during the pandemic. We simply do not get that without a dedicated workforce or an effective regulator. It is time that those opposite stopped undermining confidence in the construction sector and started backing the Queensland construction sector. I reject this motion.