




Speech By
Shane King

MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH

Record of Proceedings, 27 October 2021

MOTION

Queensland Building and Construction Commission

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (5.36 pm): It is no surprise that I rise to speak against this motion and the constant attack on the QBCC and other government organisations. Our independent building regulator always works with industry to deliver the best outcomes for home owners, builders and renovators. Those opposite do not like to acknowledge it, but there is a track record to prove it. Our government has worked with them. It has been mentioned before that we introduced legislation in relation to subbies' payments and chain of responsibility for nonconforming building products.

When home owners and builders were caught in the perfect storm of rising prices and material shortages, we set up a system through the independent regulator, the QBCC, to give Queenslanders access to free mediation services to get their homes built. The Accelerated Builder/Consumer Dispute service, the ABCD service, went live on 1 July, with professional mediators to help frustrated home owners and embattled builders find a way to get their homes completed. The Palaszczuk government took action after industry groups pleaded for help for their members—members who were caught between the toll of the pandemic on global supply chains and the boom in construction activity across the state. Critical shortages in timber and steel products as well as roofing workers added to a long list of hard-to-find products, meaning some builders were struggling to keep going on homes or faced huge cost increases to supply materials.

COVID, the home builder scheme and low interest rates, when added to our strong economic recovery from the pandemic, have drawn a lot more people to the state, creating a perfect storm for supplies and skill shortages. The Accelerated Builder/Consumer Dispute service gave home owners and builders a way to get together with the help of a professional problem solver and achieve what both sides ultimately signed up for—builders to get the job done and home owners to get into their homes.

The independent third-party mediation service was made available on the QBCC website. It is easy to get to. It is an example of a strong regulator working for the good of home owners, renovators, buildings and industry, because we put home owners, renovators and builders first. We do not exploit the unfortunate but a small number of cases where there is a dispute.

We want home owners moving into their homes, subbies paid for the work they do, workers going home safe at the end of the day—that is very important—and builders getting on with the job. Just on that, we hear a lot about unions from those opposite: 'We don't like unions. Unions this and unions that.' Unions make workplaces safe. They make sure that workplaces are safe. Every year, when I can, I get along to Workers' Memorial Day—28 April. Members should put it in their diaries. The minister has. In 2019, 183 workers were fatally injured at work—26 of them from Queensland. You know what I do not see at Workers' Memorial Day? I do not see any fake unions or any of those opposite. Put 28 April in your diary. Come along and see the good that unions do.

We did not just pluck the ABCD scheme out of thin air. It came from working with industry and looking for solutions, not cheap political points. When the Morrison government's HomeBuilder overheated the building market and builders were put under pressure, not of their own making, costs soared within contracts that were already signed. The work had to go on. QBCC continues to support them through the ABCD framework.

We have a fair, confident and safe building industry with a strong regulator. We have more licensed contractors doing business in Queensland than ever before. More than 168,000 Queensland Home Warranty Scheme policies have been issued in 2020-21 for new home builders and renovators. Our state has 18,500 apprentices on tools. We will not let those opposite undermine confidence in this critical part of Queensland's COVID-19 economic recovery plan. With 230,000 jobs and \$47.4 billion in economic activity, there is too much at stake to allow an industry to become captive to this endless political point scoring from those opposite.