




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 25 March 2021

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Fire Protection Licensing Framework

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (2.06 pm): A Labor state government policy that will take effect from 1 May this year will potentially put 2,000 people out of work. Changes to the fire protection licensing framework will ruin the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of families and their small businesses. Men and women who have been operating in the fire protection space for years, some for decades, will no longer be able to conduct their businesses beyond 1 May. I have been inundated with emails from small fire protection business owners who are distraught that they will no longer be considered qualified to do their jobs, despite doing them for years and years, because of these state government policy changes.

Here are their concerns. These changes have been made by stealth. Midyear last year they were stuck inside a bill that had nothing to do with their industry. In fact, it was a Public Service bill. They were given little or no notice, the official advice coming from the QBCC in mid-March, barely six weeks before their effective date. That is six weeks to change the business models that they have operated under for years. The upskilling that is required because of these new qualification requirements is unnecessary and unrealistic for those in the industry. It is unnecessary because they have operated in the industry for decades and have done so safely. It is unrealistic because it would require them to get a four-year plumbing apprenticeship despite the fact that they have to continue to try to make a living.

Mr Hart: And join a union.

Mr MANDER: I will come to the point made by the member for Burleigh. Those small businesses were not adequately represented on the ministerial subcommittee that reviewed the framework. They never had a voice to state their case and their objections. As the member for Burleigh has mentioned, this was introduced under the guise of safety when, in fact, it is really all about the Labor Party appeasing their union mates because it will mean more union members at the expense of small businesses.

These people are not unreasonable. In fact, they could accept the new guidelines coming in from 1 May but they would like to see their qualifications grandfathered. Those businesses, some of which have been involved in the industry for decades, may employ small numbers of people and they may employ up to 40 or 50 people, but they will no longer be able to do that as they will be on the scrap heap. I ask the minister to please listen to their concerns and respond so that 2,000 people will not be out of work.