



Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Transport and Resources Committee, Report

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (11.30 am): I rise to speak on the debate in my role as the shadow minister for public works. I specifically want to talk about the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and issues raised during the estimates hearing. Over the last few years we have had a swathe of staff, both senior staff right down to staff who have been in the commission for some time, who have left. They have done that in recent times because they are sick and tired of the political interference that has gone into decision-making and policy making within the QBCC. In the last six years this body has increased its staff by 40 per cent. If it moves, the Minister for Public Works and Procurement will regulate it. If it benefits the union movement in some way, he will regulate it to formalise that benefit. We asked pointed questions about interference in the day-to-day operations of the QBCC. The minister said the following—

I can categorically assure the committee that operational decisions of the commission are a matter for its officers. Neither the board nor my office nor anyone else has any involvement in those matters.

That statement has enraged both current and former staff of the QBCC. There is example after example of direct board influence in the operations of the QBCC, where board members sit in on staff meetings and where board members give direction with regard to policy development. Over the next short period of time more and more stories will come out from whistleblowers who have had enough of this undue influence by the board, a board that this minister appointed, a board which has as its chairman the former president of the Labor Party, Dick Williams, a board that includes Jade Ingham, a CFMEU heavyweight who has been fined repeatedly for disruptive behaviour on work sites, and the president of the National Fire Industry Association and the CEO of FVS Services Group, Mr Hickman, whose group has benefited directly from the new laws that will put hundreds of small fire protection services out of business. This minister has overseen and, I would argue, facilitated and abetted that process.

We found out this morning that it seems Mr Bassett has done his job as the commissioner and the Labor Party heavies have decided they need to move him on, to find another job for him, so they have found a job for him as the CEO of QLeave. There is only one problem—they forgot to tell the board. Anthony Marx revealed this morning in the *Courier-Mail* that they forgot to tell the board. The current CEO who applied for the job was not told. They found out about it when they read the paper yesterday morning. It is disgraceful that these things happened behind the scenes with the union heavyweights working out where they are going to put people.

I want to tell the minister and the former commissioner—which he will be after this Friday—that we have their testimony on record and it is my goal over these next few months to prove that they misled the parliamentary committee. There are people out there who will back this up. They have to be incredibly careful because they have done everything in legislation to stop whistleblowers revealing what could only be called undue influence at its best and at its worst corruption. This is entirely unacceptable. We will show where board members—not all of them—have undue influence. This is an insult to the good people of the QBCC. Most of them do a fantastic job and are worthy employees.