



Speech By  
**Tim Mander**


**MEMBER FOR EVERTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2021

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Queensland Building and Construction Commission**

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (2.45 pm): Next Monday, 1 November, is D-day for hundreds of small fire protection businesses. This is the day that Minister de Brenni's mindless changes to fire protection regulations will come into effect—changes that will not improve fire safety standards one iota but will benefit the trade union movement and that of a particular QBCC board member's business. Tens of these businesses, mostly mum-and-dad owned and operated, have written to me begging for help. They have given up on Minister de Brenni, who has abandoned them. Let me read part of one of those emails that I received just yesterday. It states—

My husband and ... I have been in the industry for over twenty-five years and we are now suddenly not qualified to do our job! Our business that we have run for over twenty years is now one of those that is in danger of having to close down and the six families that rely on it are looking at being out of work. It is utterly ridiculous that a law was passed that in effect will cause numerous small fire companies to close and that, due to the lack of licensed people that comply with these new laws, it will actually cause many small businesses to not have their fire requirements carried out simply because there will not be enough people to do the work.

They went on to say that they have no issue with getting the qualifications but that they must have time to be able to do it and they must be able to trade. These people, like the majority of others in this situation, have asked for anonymity. Why? Because they are terrified of the vindictiveness shown by the QBCC, the so-called independent building regulator, aided and abetted by a weak minister who is a servant of the extreme elements of the union movement.

The QBCC dysfunction continues in every aspect of its operations. The minister has constantly denied—again as recently as today—that neither he nor his staff or board members intervene in the operational matters of the QBCC. Emails sourced under right to information show that this assertion is patently false. Just last week a Federal Court public examination into the collapse of the Cullen Group Australia heard that an email was sent from Minister de Brenni's office to the then QBCC commissioner before the licence was suspended asking him to call the minister's office. The email from senior policy adviser Darcy Slattery told Mr Bassett that 'we need to have urgent details of this situation before the licence is suspended'. If this is not ministerial intervention, what is?

Every day another scandal about the QBCC and the minister's oversight of it comes to light. We are constantly hearing about board members' conflicts of interests and inappropriate intervention by the minister, his staff and board members. We have had hordes of experienced and respected QBCC officials resigning. We have had builders who do not meet the fit-and-proper person test still operating. We have had preferential treatment given to certain members of the public to access the minister where others cannot. We have had targeted campaigns by QBCC officials on non-unionised builders and the QBCC not acting on builders who have obviously not met building standards, and the list goes on.

This minister, the Premier and this Labor government have no option but to instigate a comprehensive, independent commission of inquiry. In my opinion they have not only a legal obligation but also a moral obligation to do this. Queensland home owners deserve this inquiry, as do honest builders and the honest officers of the QBCC. Queenslanders must have confidence in the competence and the independence of the state's building regulator.

I want to help the minister with regard to initiating this inquiry, so I table the terms of reference for the commission of inquiry that is so desperately required. I call on the minister to immediately initiate this inquiry so that this dysfunction can cease.

*Tabled paper.* Document, undated, titled 'Terms of Reference: Commission of Inquiry into the Queensland Building and Construction Commission' [1802](#).