



Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 27 October 2021

MOTION

Queensland Building and Construction Commission



Mr MANDER (Everton—LNP) (5.02 pm): I move—

That this House notes the widespread concern about the performance of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, including:

- (a) potential conflicts of interest of board members;
- (b) allegations of inappropriate intervention in the commission's affairs;
- (c) the resignation of respected and experienced officers from the commission;
- (d) inconsistent approaches to licensing builders in relation to the fit and proper person test; and
- (e) targeted campaigns against non-unionised builders

and calls on the government to launch an inquiry into the QBCC in the terms outlined by the member for Everton in the Legislative Assembly on 26 October 2021.

This motion is about the integrity of the independent building regulator in our state. No doubt the minister will get up in a moment and talk about the health of the construction industry. This minister has had no impact on the health of the construction industry in this state. In fact, the health of the construction industry has occurred in spite of this minister. This motion is about the integrity of the regulator.

Mrs Gerber: Or lack of!

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the member for Currumbin. What we are talking about is exactly that. The evidence is mounting every day that we must have an inquiry. It is important that Queenslanders, both builders and consumers, have confidence in the integrity of the building regulator. What has happened over the last few months is absolutely scandalous. We have had allegation after allegation after allegation. We have the example of preferential treatment being given to some associate of the minister so that he or his staff would intervene. A meeting was held with a person called Toni Bowler and within hours the QBCC acted—on the weekend—to make sure that they heeded the advice of the minister or his office.

This preferential treatment is reminiscent of what occurred when Jackie Trad was here. Remember when Jackie Trad had the phone number for the CCC chair and rang him on the weekend when he was sitting there in his trackie daks—his words—expecting preferential treatment? Dr Shaun McCrystal has also had issues with his neighbour. He was worried about the safety of that property. He wrote to the minister after he heard about Toni Bowler's preferential treatment asking for the same treatment. Of course that did not happen. His matter was simply passed on to the QBCC because this minister gives preference to people for some reason that he will not disclose. Who does he give preference to?

Mr Stevens: Labor mates!

Mr MANDER: Labor mates? Is it union mates? Is it members of the Labor Party? Who is it that he gives preferential treatment to? Recently we had the situation where a builder, who was a convicted sexual predator, in the course of his work perpetrated sexual crimes against women. The minister and his staff in the QBCC knew about this and did not act upon it immediately. In fact, he had the temerity to blame honest former employees of the QBCC who did recommend that this person should be finished up straight away. The minister threw these people under the bus because he had nowhere else to go. He got caught out.

On Monday, 1 November, we will have the disgraceful situation where hundreds of small businesses will be put out of work because this minister is doing the bidding of the trade union movement. He is not worried about small businesses and about employment. He is worried about making sure that his union masters are happy. He wants to be able to go to the CFMEU meeting and get the standing ovation he normally gets because of the work that he does for them. This minister is not concerned about the integrity of the regulator, he is concerned about making sure that his union masters are happy.

This minister will not support this inquiry because it will expose everything that we have just been speaking about. It will expose his incompetence. It will expose the fact that he has aided and abetted in all these issues that I have talked about—these conflicts of interest, this preferential treatment, this ministerial and board intervention into the operational matters of the QBCC. The evidence is building every day. This minister, this government and this Premier have no choice but to initiate a commission of inquiry. One of the first things that will come out of that inquiry will be that this minister must go.