




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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BUILDING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.20 pm): I will make a short contribution. Firstly, I acknowledge the chairman of our committee and the wonderful work he does. He does a great job. He is a very good chairman and we get on very well.

Mr Purdie: You're misleading the House.

Mr MILLAR: I am not misleading the House.

Mr Purdie: I think you are misleading the House.

Mr MILLAR: No. He is an excellent chairman. He listens to all committee members. I also thank the other committee members: the member for Toowoomba North, the member for Condamine, the member for Mundingburra and the member for Stretton. We all do a good job. This was not a controversial bill but a very technical bill. It was very dry in its arguments. I do not think it kept many people watching the broadcast. I am sure that the former member for Callide, Colin Boyce, is listening to us right now.

Mr Watts: He'd be tuned in.

Mr MILLAR: He would be tuned in. With indulgence, I would like to congratulate the former member for Callide on winning the seat of Flynn. He is a good man. He will do a good job. We will miss him but we will still get to see him. I am sure those on the other side will still try to have a crack at him. He is a decent man and a hardworking bloke and he will do well for Flynn.

This bill is about supporting contemporary consumer expectations about the efficiency of buildings through amendments to legislative provisions regarding 'ban the banners'—that was a new phrase for me; I had never heard of that before, but now I know what it means—solar hot-water systems and solar panels; expanded use of greywater; and holding tanks for sewage and greywater. This bill is also about enhancing the efficacy and transparency of the regulatory framework through amendments to legislative provisions regarding head contractor licensing, and I want to talk about that.

There has been some concern over head contractor licensing in terms of people being able to get the job done and having the right licensing in place. If you are a plumber and you are doing a major plumbing job on a renovation and there needs to be some building work done, there has been some concern about the fact that the plumber cannot do the building work because they need a licensed contractor to do it. It is a technical issue but it can cause some red-tape issues. We need to have a look at that. We need to make it as easy as possible for people to do renovations. Right now people are finding it hard to find staff, to find contractors, to do the builds and the renovations. I was talking to a builder the other day in Emerald—Peter Davies.

Mr Purdie: What'd he say?

Mr MILLAR: He said, 'I've got work right up until next year and I cannot find staff.' As a government we need to be an enabler. When it comes to legislation, we need to make it easier for people to complete their work and service the community. I ask the minister to have a look at this issue.

I understand some of the issues behind it. The chairman of the committee has been good at explaining them from where he comes from. I understand that. We also have to look at reducing red tape and allow people to get on and do the builds and the renovations that they need to do. I call on the minister and the government to look at that.

The Transport and Resources Committee provided its report on 13 May. The report made two recommendations—that the bill be passed and that, in developing the regulation relating to the head contractor licensing exemptions, the minister should clearly define the type of work prescribed under the regulation and consider the timing of commencement as suggested by stakeholders. That is important. Stakeholders did have a bit to say on that. I call on the minister and the department to have a look at that and see if we can fix that.

Something that I do have a concern about that we need to get on top of is the combustible cladding issue. There are components in the bill which relate to the removal of combustible cladding on private buildings. Clause 21 of the bill will enable the QBCC to commence prosecution against those who have committed an offence in relation to the combustible cladding checklist process. Without this amendment the QBCC is powerless to commence prosecutions on this issue. This has meant that since the Building and Other Legislation (Cladding) Amendment Regulation 2018 came into effect, no state government agencies have had the authority to prosecute noncompliant building owners. Even with the ability to prosecute a building owner for inaction, there may still be difficulty in getting the building owner to remove the cladding. That is a serious issue. We need to get on top of this right away.

This has been a known issue since 2017, yet the state government still has no clear solution for the problem of combustible cladding on private structures. This has dragged on for far too long. We need to get on top of this. As at the end of April, there are nearly 30 government sites where flammable cladding is still present. That is an issue. That is a concern. I call on the minister and the department to find a solution to this. We all remember what happened in the UK. It was frightening to see the TV images of that building on fire. When we have cladding issues in state government buildings—we have hardworking public servants working in these environments—we have to make sure that they are safe if something happens. I call on the minister and the government and the department to come back to us with a solution. We will support it. If you can find a solution, we will support it and make sure that we get on top of this issue.

These buildings include schools, hospitals and libraries. They are all listed on the government website. We cannot continue to have these cladding issues in primary health care, primary education and libraries. We have to make sure that we get on top of this issue. I call on the minister to find a solution and bring it back to parliament. I am more than happy to talk to him about it. What is the hold-up? Does the government have a legitimate excuse for why it is taking so long? I am looking forward to the minister's response at the end of this debate to tell us what has happened. Where are we with this? What is the solution? How are we going forward with this? I look forward to hearing his response.

When it comes to privately owned buildings, there is still no answer for how this problem is going to be fixed. When it comes to rectification, what is the government's plan? Do they have one? Does the government now think that this legislation to prosecute and compel the removal of cladding is the solution? Some in the industry think it will not cut the mustard. Come back to us at the end of this debate and tell us how it does cut the mustard. We are talking about a problem we have known about since 2017. It is now 2022, yet this issue is still around and we need to fix it. There are people living and working in these buildings every day.

Finally, I pay tribute to the hardworking secretariat of our committee—Deb and Zac. Zac has been off this week. They do an enormous amount of work for us. They play a critical role in making sure we have every piece of information. Deb Jeffrey, Zac and Amanda, thank you so much for what you do. Once again, I thank the committee—our chair and our committee members. We are working through quite a number of issues at the moment. We have the review into the islands and we have a couple of issues about roads that we have to look at. I think we work well together. I commend this bill to the House.