



Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Transport and Resources Committee, Report

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (12.15 pm): I rise to speak about the estimates hearings. I appeared before the Transport and Resources Committee. The area of interest to me was public works. The issue that we focused on the most was the performance of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, which has been under incredible pressure for some time. Our focus and our criticism of the QBCC has not been on the workers of the QBCC; it has been on the leadership, from the minister to the board, to the senior executive leadership of the QBCC. Some of what we learned through this estimates hearing was incredibly disturbing.

What was very well publicised in the media is the fact that the QBCC decided that they needed somebody to help them work out how they could have better relationships with the minister. They engaged Anacta, that magical lobbying firm that has had such incredible success, that lobbying firm that is a known big donor to the Labor Party and that lobbying firm whose principal is a former Labor MP, Evan Moorhead. The QBCC chair engaged him so they could be trained better on knowing how to deal with the minister. Let us just examine how ridiculous this is. A Labor minister who comes from the left faction has appointed, as chair of the QBCC, the former president of the Labor Party who was also from the left faction. He then went outside of the normal procurement processes and engaged Anacta and Evan Moorhead, who was a former Labor MP and still part of the left faction and who also worked for Dick Williams, the chair, when they were together in the union body.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr MANDER: The ALP, that is correct. All of that to work out how to deal with the minister who appointed them in the first place. I have not heard of a more ridiculous situation than this, and all at taxpayers' expense; a waste of nearly \$10,000 to engage them.

Mr Watts: So cash changed hands.

Mr MANDER: You said that, member, not me. We also found out that the QBCC spent over \$1 million on a publicity campaign to improve their image because they have been attacked lately. They put a you-beaut promo together with a couple of stars from the television program *The Block*. What they failed to realise was that this builder from *The Block* is actually a registered builder in Queensland. He was on this video promoting the work of the QBCC and encouraging builders to do the right thing, but they forgot to check his registration. This guy, who is a registered builder in Queensland, had had his

licence suspended five times for not paying his licencing fee. No-one thought to check the registration of the person who would be the pin-up boy for the QBCC. He was person who had not paid his licence fees.

We also talked about the Varghese report into the operations of the QBCC over the past number of years. Mr Varghese warned the minister and the government about politicising the QBCC. However, as I have already mentioned, the minister has been guilty of exactly that by appointing the former president of the Labor Party as the chair of the QBCC, by appointing a former Labor minister to the board of the QBCC and by appointing an assistant secretary of the CFMEU to the board of the QBCC. That is politicisation in anybody's language and the minister is guilty of doing that.

Mr Varghese also talked about the fact that there have been nine reviews into the QBCC over the past seven years and still those issues have not been resolved under the leadership of this minister. Mr Varghese said that they need a sustainable funding model and this minister has not ruled out increasing fees and taxes on builders. At this time when the building industry is struggling, the minister needs to do the right thing to remove that fear and anxiety by ruling out that proposition.