



Speech By
Adam Baillie

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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QUEENSLAND BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Mr BAILLIE** (Townsville—LNP) (5.00 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate and speak in support of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. I know this industry. I have worked it and I have lived it. I also note that I am one of two electricians in this place and I believe the only refrigeration mechanic in this place. I hold an electrical fitter and electrical mechanic licence with the Electrical Safety Office and a mechanical services licence for air conditioning and refrigeration as well as plumbing with the QBCC.

Mr McDonald: Wow, aren't you a bright spark?

Mr BAILLIE: I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. I have spent years on construction sites, in both residential and commercial jobs, and in roof spaces that are like saunas in the Townsville heat. It was while I was on the tools and working at my customers' houses or places of work that I was prompted to run as a candidate. While I was fixing one thing for my customer, they would often share what else was going on in their life and what else they thought needed fixing, and I would agree. They would say that something needed to be done about it, and I would agree. That prompted the next question: who was going to do something about all of the issues my customers and my community were raising? That is ultimately what prompted me to put my hand up and, as it happened, now be in the extremely fortunate position to be the member for Townsville and able to help fix some of those issues that my community were raising with me.

I have worked alongside chippies, plumbers, plasterers, blockies, builders and handymen. I know what keeps job sites moving and, just as importantly, what slows them down. I know how time poor anyone who runs a trade business is and how paperwork is often put aside or delayed, particularly if it is difficult or not convenient. Tradies would rather be out on the job building something new or fixing a problem than in the office doing paperwork. When it is difficult to do paperwork, it is less likely to get done.

Traditionally, trade contractors have been looked at as low technology adopters, but I can say that this has definitely changed in recent years. As technology continues to develop, more and more tradies are adopting new tools and applications to help them get their work done. These new tools offer more efficient documentation and transfer of documents, whether they are related to documents of business health, such as cashflow with quotes and invoices, or something more critical, such as workforce health and safety, through electronic versions and systems supporting SWMS and prestart checklists.

Safety should be the No. 1 priority on every worksite, and it is the No. 1 priority of our government. I will not attempt to put it as eloquently as the member for Burleigh did just moments ago, but I will summarise it by saying that corners are cut when there is a lack of time, and that is why these changes

are so important. Anyone who has ever had to deal with the QBCC knows that the system was built for another era. It is so good to see the Building Reg Reno being undertaken and the improvements to the system being made to support the industry. I have recently renewed my own QBCC licence, and it took several weeks to receive the new version in the mail.

Mrs Poole: You should have done it online.

Mr BAILLIE: I take that interjection from the member for Mundingburra. I recall how difficult it was to navigate the system when air conditioning and refrigeration were initially included in the QBCC. In addition to the national ARCTick licence for handling refrigerants, we were required to engage with the QBCC to get a QBCC licence. I remember how many days and weeks this process took, as well as the in-person visits to regional offices, while we navigated the outdated system. This bill addresses a great deal of those roadblocks that stopped the QBCC utilising digital technology, resulting in future communication being more streamlined and efficient.

I was at a barbecue last weekend talking about the ability to get an electronic QBCC licence with a fellow tradie who has many more years of experience in life than I have. He is in his late 60s and he had already signed up to the digital QBCC licence and he showed me that licence right there at the barbecue. As the minister knows, I have not yet got my digital licence but I look forward to downloading it in the very near future. In addition, making it possible for licence holders to receive communications electronically further streamlines communication with the QBCC.

I note that those opposite are concerned about safety, and I can assure them that we are also deeply concerned about safety—safety of our tradies and safety of our community. I understand the tragic circumstances that resulted in the passing of Jason Garrels, and I would like to place on record my sympathy to his father who I understand is here with us today. That tragic incident prompted tremendous improvements in the reporting of deaths or serious injuries that occur on job sites. On a job site, there is nothing more important than safety—nothing.

Under the existing system, if a serious incident occurs, a QBCC licensee has to report it twice—once to the Office of Industrial Relations and once to the QBCC. This bill does not remove the need to report, but it streamlines the reporting process for safety incidents. It utilises mature information-sharing arrangements to enable serious incidents to be reported to the OIR, and the QBCC will receive the necessary information if the submitter is a QBCC licence holder. To show we are serious about safety, the consequence for noncompliance has increased from 80 to 100 penalty points. These changes make it easier for QBCC licence holders to satisfy their reporting obligations when serious incidents occur on a job site and increase the penalties for those who do not.

With tranche 1 and 2 of the Building Reg Reno already delivered earlier this year, this bill further assists the industry and makes it easier for tradies and contractors to be productive, well informed and safe. We respect the people who build our homes, schools, hospitals, stadiums and job-creating projects. This bill gives our tradies and builders the modern, efficient, responsive regulator they deserve. As an electrician and refrigeration mechanic who spent years working side by side with North Queensland tradies, I am proud to support this bill and I commend this bill to the House.