



Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 20 November 2025

**QUEENSLAND BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

Second Reading

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (5.07 pm): Labor will always support modernisation efforts, where smart reforms can contribute to greater government efficiency without impeding public safety. We support the digitisation amendments in the Queensland Building and Construction Commission bill to provide a faster and easier licensing process for both industry and consumers. It is good to see that Labor's great ideas continue to live on in some way under the Crisafulli LNP government, much like the 50-cent fares and smart ticketing on our state's public transport system. The progress made on digital reforms that make up the core of this bill also occurred under Labor.

It was our government that understood the need for a digital option to reflect the changing needs of the sector and began the implementation process. The proposed amendments to the bill remove the requirement for physical licence cards and allow for digital licences via the Queensland Digital Licence app. These changes will move us towards a more user-friendly model, meaning that industry professionals can navigate their work with their credentials safely stored on their phone. That means no return trips to the regulator to get a replacement card when you realise you have lost your physical licence. Removing these small layers of red tape supports the QBCC's mission to improve customer experience.

The real point of contention in the bill concerns the licensee's obligations to notify the QBCC of safety matters. The LNP's changes to amend section 54A of the act would remove the legislative requirement for licensees to notify both the QBCC and the Office of Industrial Relations of the same safety incident. The bill would require licensees to notify just the OIR and the information would then be shared with the QBCC. We cannot support this clause and the changes that come from it. We emphatically advise against attempts to remove the current dual notification requirements for serious safety incidents, a safeguard adopted following Jason Garrels's devastating death and the tireless campaign of his father, Michael, for greater protections for workers in the industry. Eliminating existing reporting obligations without establishing alternative reporting provisions through legislation or regulation poses an unacceptable risk to the safety of workers and contractors. We cannot overstate the risks that follow on from a failure to share information in an appropriate and timely fashion between regulators.

Labor has a rich history of standing up for workers. We have always stood with workers to place their safety first and foremost. These apparently streamlined reporting processes and requirements just water down the responsibilities of licensees when faced with serious safety matters. Explicit legal requirements that shape the information-sharing relationship between the OIR and the QBCC should replace what is now established under a memorandum of understanding. These obligations should extend to relevant regulators being required to share appropriate details with the QBCC relative to

notifiable incidents where a QBCC licence holder is involved within a reasonable timeframe. Above all, the QBCC must continue to receive relevant information about safety matters and the investigation outcomes involving licensees.

Let us be clear here that the implementation of streamlined processes should never come at the expense of workplace safety. Appearing before the committee that examined the bill which I was a member of, Michael Garrels, a father who has taken up the fight for stronger industry regulations in honour of his son, made his concerns abundantly clear. As a workplace health and safety advocate, Michael said that reporting serious safety events must remain a mandatory requirement. Those opposite argue that the dual notification process risks important details being missed or delays in reporting incidents. I just do not see their logic.

Changes to the bill in 2017 introduced dual notifications, ensuring the QBCC had direct awareness of serious safety incidents. The QBCC has acted on over 900 safety notifications it received over the last five years, demonstrating that those safety notifications do work. This government says they are pursuing these reforms to increase efficiency—and the LNP knows all about efficiency, of course, if you ask them. We know what can happen when important concerns are left to guidelines or recommendations rather than legal requirements. After hearing from the Department of Housing and Public Works staff at the public briefing, we know that there are no service-level agreements in place between the QBCC and other relevant regulators. The absence of established timeframes, responsibilities and pathways for the sharing of serious incident notifications is of great concern. Any breakdown in the information-sharing relationship between regulators and any harm that comes to workers will lie squarely at the feet of this LNP government.