




Speech By
Hermann Vorster

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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

Second Reading

 **Mr VORSTER** (Burleigh—LNP) (4.42 pm): Those on this side of the House, and by that I mean the government benches, are very interested in constructing homes, whereas those on the opposition side are interested in constructing straw man arguments against not only reforms that are sensible but reforms that will deliver meaningful safety improvements.

To counter the absurd argument prosecuted by those in the opposition, our legislation will increase the penalties for those doing the wrong thing and putting lives in jeopardy on building sites. We have increased those penalties not only to ensure there are consequences for actions but to ensure we have the maximum deterrent available so that people do not take risks with young lives in the first place. That is a proposition that those opposite cannot stomach because they are so invested in the status quo, the status quo which left the QBCC utterly stuck in the past and incapable of delivering modern services to a modern Queensland economy.

I am very proud of the bill that the responsible minister has brought before the House because not only does it deal with safety on worksites but it allows small businesses to invest more of their time into safety by removing the time that they must spend with paperwork. Although it was not captured as an interjection, I want to note that that point was made by the member for Townsville earlier, himself a tradie who has worked—

Mr Stevens: A good tradie.

Mr VORSTER: I take that interjection—a fine tradie who has seen it all on worksites. He knows, having built a business from the ground up and having been an apprentice, what paperwork does. It destroys the passion for the profession. It drowns you while you try to create not only a life for your family but jobs and opportunity for others. It robs you of the time that you may commit to investing in better and safer work practices.

What I am most excited about with these reforms is that they are yet another signal to the mum-and-dad tradies out there that they finally have a government that has their back. I am greatly concerned by the corporatisation of construction in this state where only the very large, top tier, unionised businesses have the ability to bring homes up out of the ground. We have arrived at this situation because the former Labor government has made it so diabolically difficult for tradies, small mum-and-dad businesses, to back themselves and build the homes that Queenslanders actually want—the duplexes, the triplexes and the sixpack. That is the missing middle this state needs that would otherwise have been delivered by mum-and-dad businesses. It is not happening because Labor has made it too difficult for mum-and-dad builders and developers to deliver a product because their contractors have been so tied up.

I am glad that by introducing this legislation and securing its passage we can demonstrate to those builders, to those tradies still clinging on in this industry for dear life, that finally they have a government that not only understands their plight but will back them in so that they can get back to the business of building homes. That is in such contrast to the hollow arguments prosecuted by those opposite today who, by the way, have no credibility because just moments ago we heard a member opposite talk about safety on worksites as if they did not facilitate the CFMEU! The CFMEU, the greatest organised criminal gang that Queensland has ever seen—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Member, I will bring you back to relevance to the bill before us.

Mr VORSTER: Those opposite are very interested in workplace safety which goes to the heart of this bill. It is critically important that as a government we respond to workplace safety issues. When there are unscrupulous operators doing the wrong thing there must be consequences for action. I have been greatly concerned that there has not been a bipartisan approach to dealing with workplace safety issues, particularly when our government proposes consequences for action on worksites.

I always remember an interaction I had at the polling place at Palm Beach State School, where a young man on a pushbike approached me as he went to vote. He asked me: 'Why should I vote for you?' I looked him in the eye and I said, 'Would you like to own a home one day?' He grabbed my how-to-vote card and said, 'You have my vote.' While this is but a small step, this piece of legislation is one of many that cumulatively will ensure we have the capacity to build homes in this state. We will not be able to build homes in the state if we have a regulatory system that crushes the ambition of those who want to build homes, crushes them with duplicate processes, duplicate paperwork and archaic ways of managing their licences and registration. Modernising our regulatory framework, making it fit for purpose and responsive to the needs of those participating in the industry will unlock productive potential in this state.

In closing, not only do I want to thank the Minister for Housing for his work in this space but I want to thank our Minister for Customer Services and Minister for Small and Family Business who recently visited my electorate and had an opportunity to chat with a local builder to demonstrate to that builder that we were prepared to modernise our licensing system so that he could get on with the job of building. He did not have to run to the glove box in his ute and grab paperwork. All he had to do was pull out his phone from his pocket and do what was required under the law to demonstrate that he was keeping his workers safe and doing the right thing by his customers.

This government collectively has a laser-like focus on unlocking housing. The housing minister is responsible for this legislation, the Minister for Customer Services is responsible for modernising Queensland systems, we have a Minister for Home Ownership and we have a cabinet subcommittee. We are doing everything we can.

In conclusion, I want to deliver a message to the young people of the Burleigh electorate. Your future is important to me. I want to give you a future where you have the opportunity to purchase a home, put down roots and have a permanent stake in your community. I feel passionately that you should have that opportunity because everybody—everybody—should aspire to the things they want. As long as we had a government that made it more difficult to build homes, we took that opportunity off the table. We are putting it back on the table. We are going to unleash construction across the state of Queensland. We are going to make it easier for mum-and-dad businesses to build the sorts of homes that you want to own and you want to live in, and we are doing that day in, day out. These thousands of decisions, these thousands of small steps we are taking, will add up to a future where you own it. I am really proud of that.

For those who are concerned about workplace safety, today you have a government that is prepared to reintroduce consequences for actions to ensure those who are doing the wrong thing are held to account with harsher penalties. We are going to make sure that when concerns are raised they are raised very quickly through automated systems so that justice is done, and that is the difference.