



Speech By  
**Michael Healy**


**MEMBER FOR CAIRNS**

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

### **Second Reading**

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (4.52 pm): I rise today to speak on the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. This bill is a vital step forward in modernising our building and construction regulatory framework. I am pleased to see that the reforms envisaged by the Labor Party are finally being implemented, even if under a different banner.

At its core, this bill advances two priorities: the digitalisation of licensing and regulatory processes, which are greatly needed; and a recalibration of the safety notification regime for serious incidents. Both deserve careful consideration. While we welcome progress, we must remain vigilant to ensure protections are maintained for workers and consumers alike.

First, the bill's digital reforms mark an important advancement in how builders, contractors and consumers interact with the QBCC. By removing the requirement for physical licence cards and enabling digital access via the Queensland Digital Licence app, we are making licensing faster, easier and more accessible. The ability to serve documents electronically and the requirement for licensees to update contact details within 14 days demonstrates a commitment to efficiency and responsiveness. This has obviously been the feedback from a number in the industry. At the same time, the bill ensures customers still have the option for physical communication or in-person service at regional centres, thereby preserving accessibility in rural and regional Queensland.

Labor proudly supports these reforms because they are reforms we initiated. Now, in government they are being rebranded from maroon to blue. However, the transition to digital licensing was a policy priority under the former Labor government designed to reduce administrative burdens and improve service delivery for licensees and consumers alike. By modernising the system we help contractors devote less time to paperwork and more time to building, and we give consumers faster certainty about whom they are dealing with when they invite a builder onto their property.

The second major component of the bill concerns the statutory safety notification regime. In 2017 the dual notification requirement was introduced so that serious safety incidents would be reported to both the Office of Industrial Relations and the QBCC. That measure was not symbolic. It recognises that when serious safety breaches occur both workplace safety regulators and building regulators have important roles to play. Over the past five years QBCC has acted on more than 900 safety notifications, 26 show cause notices were sought and five licences were cancelled due to serious safety breaches. These results demonstrate that the statutory notification system works to identify unsafe behaviour, intervening and protecting both workers and, most importantly, the public.

Under clause 26 of the bill, section 54A of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 is amended so that licensees will notify only the Office of Industrial Relations, with the information then being shared with the QBCC. In effect, the shared responsibility becomes a delegated

administrative arrangement rather than a legislated obligation. While the system may operate in practice, the former Labor government warned against weakening statutory safeguards. Relying solely on a memorandum of understanding or administrative agreement is no substitute for a legal obligation. If information sharing between regulators fails, responsibility will rest squarely with the government that chose to remove the legislative requirement. Labor therefore supports the bill in principle, but we cannot support clause 26 in its current form for the reasons stated. It is incumbent on any government to maintain clear and enforceable safeguards that protect workers, consumers and industry integrity. Removing the dual notification imperative is a step in the wrong direction, and we caution the government to retain robust statutory protections.

It is worth emphasising the vital role the QBCC plays in our state's building and construction sector. Established under the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991, the QBCC regulates and enforces standards that protect consumers, support contractors and underpin a vital industry. From licensing contractors for work over \$3,300, offering dispute resolution services, issuing directions to rectify defective work, managing the Home Warranty Scheme and monitoring product supply chains, the QBCC works to ensure home owners and industry operators alike can undertake building and renovation works with confidence. For contractors and the industry itself, the QBCC legitimises qualified operators, prevents undercutting by unlicensed operators, provides education and compliance support, monitors financial health and enforces integrity across the sector. With the building and construction sector contributing more than \$59 billion annually to Queensland's economy and employing over 270,000 people, the role of the QBCC in fostering stability, trust and economic activity cannot be overstated.

Labor governments initiated the modern regulatory architecture for the industry by: establishing the licensing regime; embedding consumer protections; instituting the Home Warranty Scheme; strengthening product supply chain oversight; and embedding safety notifications. These initiatives laid the foundation for a safer, fairer and more professional industry. Under Labor there was a clear understanding that supporting builders and contractors required balancing regulation with service. Equally, protecting consumers required robust rights and recourse. These are the principles that enabled the QBCC to evolve into the regulatory body it is today.

By enabling digital licensing, the bill supports busy builders, regional operators and small business contractors and helps reduce red tape so industry can thrive. Fewer administrative obstacles means more time onsite, less time in the office and smoother interactions for licence holders and clients. For households and consumers, digital access boosts transparency. Licence status, contact details and other regulatory information will be more accessible and verifiable.

The Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 represents an important step forward for Queensland's building and construction industry and for consumers alike. Labor supports the digitalisation reforms, as we have said. Although we support the bill in large measure, we must emphasise that statutory safety protections must remain robust. Clause 26, which is the removal of the dual notification requirement, is a weakening of a safeguard introduced for a reason following tragic circumstances. If regulators fail to share critical information, the consequences may be catastrophic and it is the government that will be accountable. We call on the government to honour the legacy of the reform it inherited so as to protect Queenslanders and to ensure, more importantly, that this bill delivers both an improved and modern service and unwavering safety standards.