




Speech By
Natalie Marr

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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QUEENSLAND BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Ms MARR** (Thuringowa—LNP) (5.11 pm): I rise today to speak in strong support of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. As the member for Thuringowa representing the hardworking people of Townsville and North Queensland, I am acutely aware of the unique challenges our regional communities face in the building and construction sector. From the aftermath of devastating floods and cyclones to the pressing need for more housing and infrastructure for our growing population, this bill is welcomed and essential. It delivers practical reforms that will cut red tape, embrace digital innovation and put more time back into the hands of our tradies, allowing them to focus on what they do best: building stronger communities.

Let me begin by acknowledging the context of this legislation. This bill forms the third tranche of the Queensland government's Building Regulation Renovation, our comprehensive effort to modernise our regulatory framework and boost productivity in the building industry. In regional areas like Townsville, where our economy relies heavily on construction for jobs, housing and recovery from natural disasters, outdated processes have long been a barrier. Think back to the 2019 floods that ravaged our regions. Builders and tradies were out there day and night rebuilding homes and infrastructure but they were bogged down by the cumbersome paperwork, mandatory hard copy licences and duplicate reporting requirements. Small family-run businesses, which form the backbone of our local industry, simply could not afford the loss of hours. This bill addresses these issues head-on, ensuring our regulatory system supports growth rather than stifling it.

One of the most transformative aspects of this bill is its push towards digital licensing and electronic services. No longer will QBCC licences be tied to outdated hard copy cards that get lost, damaged or delayed in the mail. Instead, the bill removes legislative barriers, allowing the QBCC to fully embrace digital platforms. Licensees will be able to access, renew and verify their credentials electronically from their phones or tablets on a job site. For a builder in Thuringowa rushing between projects in suburbs like Kirwan or out in the rural fringes, this means less downtime waiting for paperwork and more time delivering quality work.

The bill also enables the electronic service of documents via email and allows virtual attendance at investigative meetings using technology for real-time communication. These changes will significantly reduce administration burdens, particularly for regional operators, who already contend with long distances, unpredictable weather and supply chain challenges.

Safety on our building sites is paramount, and this bill strengthens that commitment without adding unnecessary complexity. Currently, licensees face duplicate reporting obligations for serious workplace incidents, having to notify multiple regulators for the same event. This bill streamlines the process: builders report once to the relevant authority under the Work Health and Safety Act or the Electrical Safety Act. That ensures faster disciplinary action where needed, protects workers and maintains industry standards.

To highlight the importance of compliance, I point out that the bill increases penalties for failing to report safety matters from 80 to 100 penalty points. Some may view this as tough, but in a region like ours where sites battle extreme heat, storms and isolation, stronger enforcement saves lives. It weeds out rogue operators, levels the playing field for honest tradies and ultimately lowers insurance costs while building client confidence. In Townsville, with our booming defence and housing sectors, safer sites mean more jobs and sustainable growth.

Furthermore, this bill aligns perfectly with our state's ambitious housing agenda. In Thuringowa and across North Queensland, where population growth and first home buyer demand are surging, these reforms will accelerate project delivery. Local firms in Townsville, from small subbies to local contractors, have long voiced frustrations about QBCC rigour. This legislation listens to that feedback, fostering a more responsive regulator that prioritises productivity over paperwork. As a lifelong North Queenslander who has lived and worked in Townsville for over 47 years, I know firsthand the resilience of our builders. I speak with them and those who advocate for them on a very regular basis. They have rebuilt after cyclones, supported our communities through tough times and driven economic recovery. This bill values that hard work by giving them the tools, literally and figuratively, to thrive. It reduces costs, enhances efficiency and creates a safer, more modern industry that benefits everyone: tradies, home owners and our regional economy.

In conclusion, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 is a lifeline for regional Queensland. I commend the bill to the House. I urge all members, particularly those representing our vast regional electorates, to support it. Please pardon the pun, but let's build a brighter, more efficient future for Townsville and beyond.