




Speech By
Hon. Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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

Second Reading

 **Hon. SJ MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (Minister for Customer Services and Open Data and Minister for Small and Family Business) (5.52 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. At the outset, I congratulate my colleague Minister Sam O'Connor and my own department for the work they did in relation to the new suite of QBCC digital licences. A couple of weeks ago we unveiled another nine licences that are part of the stack that includes the existing digital driver's licence and the marine licence. I will come back to that when I speak about an example of the new licence in action on the Gold Coast which the member for Burleigh alluded to in the speech that he made earlier this afternoon.

For the benefit of the member for Ipswich West and the member for Lytton—this was also raised by other contributors to the debate tonight—I want to make clear a fundamental precept that those on this side of the chamber hold very dear. It is a sacred totem that the LNP holds dear, that is, choice. When it comes to personal freedoms, we will enable people to still have a plastic card if they choose to use that. We would encourage people to make use of the new digital suite, particularly the QBCC licences, but, as the inaugural Minister for Customer Services and Open Data, I am very proud that we will make sure that the traditional licence card option is not removed. People will always have that choice.

It is also pertinent to make the point that anywhere from 60 to 70 per cent of Queensland lacks digital connectivity so this makes sense for a couple of reasons. The first is the technological reasons but another is one I mentioned at the outset: one of the things that we on this side of the chamber hold dear is fundamental choice. Having said that, I want to acknowledge the genesis for these reforms that have continued over the years. I would be remiss if I did not mention the tragic passing of Jason Garrels in 2012. Even though years have passed since that tragic incident, I absolutely acknowledge the pain that must still cause his family and friends. I acknowledge them in my contribution.

I want to make sure that the House is aware of the fact that we are not going to roll out technology for the sake of it. We want to make sure it is there for a reason. We want to drive two facets. One of them is undoubtedly an improved customer service experience. The other thing I will always point out is that we want to drive productivity. We now have a range of digital licences in the digital suite and we would encourage all Queenslanders, regardless of the qualification they have, to seriously think about taking up that particular customer choice if it is offered digitally. One of the reasons for that is it makes available a range of options.

I will highlight that by explaining why I visited the member for Burleigh only a few weeks ago—in fact, it was on about 10 November, from memory. I caught up with some fantastic Clark Construction Group tradies. It was literally the day that we announced and unveiled the licence. I wanted to go onsite to meet a tradie and the member for Burleigh was very generous in making that arrangement. Using

my digital ID on my phone, I was able to do an electronic 'handshake' in real time with the contractor who had already downloaded his QBCC licence. As was reflected in the contribution of the member for Glass House, that enabled me to verify digitally in real time that that gentleman indeed had a current and up-to-date licence. Let us think about that from a customer choice perspective: you have engaged a contractor to come onsite whom you have never laid eyes on before, so the first thing you want to do is establish his electronic bona fides. Now you can do that.

Without going into ISO encryption techniques et cetera, the standard that we have for electronic hand-off in relation to digital verification, security and safety is amongst the best in the world. That is something we are particularly proud of. I assure the House that this is merely the start. We have made it pretty clear that we are well and truly on a digital journey—I have said it once and I will say it again—for a better customer experience and also, as I am sure everyone in this chamber would agree, because we have to start driving productivity.

At the end of the day, nine QBCC licences have been added to the digital wallet. As a previous speaker mentioned, we have had a digital driver's licence in play for nearly three years and about one million Queenslanders have taken up that option. That is roughly 22 to 25 per cent. We unashamedly want to drive up that figure because, particularly in the lead-up to the 2032 Olympic Games, we want to give people a full digital experience. It has started now. In the coming months and years, we will continue to work with different agencies to add to that digital suite. This is all part and parcel of making Queensland a robust and modern 21st century economy.

Something that is completely related is that we will continue to work with the federal government wherever we can, literally hand in glove, to improve the technological coverage of Queensland. South-East Queensland is not too bad, although there will always be black spots. The coastline of Queensland is also not too bad. However, generally, the moment you travel 30 minutes inland from any coastal city, town or hamlet the five bars of coverage drops to four, then to three, then to two, then to one and then to no signal. We will work hand in glove to make sure digital licences are here not just for tomorrow but forever.

Again I take this opportunity to thank the staff from both departments who have worked together fantastically well on something we are particularly proud of. This is indeed good legislation. This is something that we on this side of the chamber wholeheartedly support. Digital licences are definitely the way of the future in Queensland. Again I thank Minister O'Connor and his department for working hand in glove with my department to make QBCC digital licences a reality.