



Speech By
Hon. Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

QUEENSLAND BUILDING SERVICES AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (12.12 pm): I rise to contribute to the Queensland Building Services Authority Amendment Bill 2013, introduced into the House on 5 June 2013 by the Minister for Housing and Public Works, the honourable member for Everton. I thank the honourable member for Chatsworth for allowing me to step in in front of him in speaking to this bill. The primary objective of this bill is to replace the Queensland Building Services Authority with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission.

The LNP has been unwavering in its pledge to Queenslanders to grow a four-pillar economy focusing on tourism, agriculture, resources and construction. Under the very capable watch of the honourable member for Everton, this bill will deliver on strengthening the construction pillar of the economy. It will facilitate the biggest reform of building industry regulations in more than two decades. The Newman government is committed to generating and supporting confidence in the building sector because, unlike those opposite, we understand a good economy requires work on all four pillars—not putting all your eggs in one basket.

The \$15,000 Great State Grant is an example of this support and provided a positive step towards enabling Queenslanders to buy their first home. The provisions in this bill will further build on the initiatives already underway to encourage people to build a new home, renovate an existing one or perhaps start or expand a business in the industry.

In August of 2012 this House agreed to task the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee with an inquiry into the operation and performance of the Queensland BSA. 'And not before time,' were the cries we heard in the community. On 30 November 2012 the results of the inquiry were tabled.

Having held the shadow portfolio of public works for two years in opposition, it comes as no surprise that the inquiry suggested extensive changes to the BSA. In my role at the time, I was privy to a large number of incidents and information that were ample justification that a far-reaching review was required. Disputes that dragged on for years with no clear outcomes brought a steady stream of distraught homeowners through my door.

In one of the many media releases I distributed on the issues surrounding the BSA, I criticised then minister Robert Swarten for his refusal to address or comprehend these serious issues. In 2009-10 he boasted that \$88,000 worth of fines were issued, yet in that same period a record \$42 million in payouts were made to protect affected homeowners. Interestingly, that was up 50 per cent on the previous year. As I highlighted at the time, issuing fines and boasting about it failed to address a clearly systemic issue. It comes as no surprise that it took a change of government to see real action and real changes.

On 29 May this year the government's response to the inquiry was released and includes a clear 10-point action plan. The minister is to be commended for setting the bar high and for working towards having the best building regulator in the country—one that provides independence in decision

making and one that is fair and equitable to both consumers and licensees alike. We set our standards high in this government because we recognise that Queensland is a great state with great opportunity.

The new commission, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, will have a governing board and a commissioner. The board will be responsible for strategic planning and operational, financial and administrative policies of the commission. Critics of the BSA long held the view that it was a toothless tiger and purely served in an advisory role. Importantly, the passage of this bill will ensure that is no longer the case. The board will be responsible for ensuring the efficient, effective and proper performance of the commission. They will also have a role in reporting to the minister on performance and issues affecting the building industry and consumers—for example, unfair trading practices affecting the security of payments to subcontractors.

This is an extremely important sector and those in the industry deserve to know they have a government working with them with a clear goal and intent to strike the right balance between consumers and contractors. I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to the BSA area manager for the Gold Coast, Mr Paul Nash, for providing statistics on the Currumbin electorate. It is a big industry on the Gold Coast with 9,932 active licences. Currumbin alone has 1,575 active licences, 421 individual builder licences and 89 company builder licences. On the contracting side, Currumbin has 838 individual contractor licences and 142 company contractor licences. Complaints received for 2012-13 for the Gold Coast totalled 430. Some 83 of them were from the Currumbin electorate. As members can see, there is certainly a need for review of this industry.

As the minister has indicated, this bill addresses two of the recommendations in the 10-point action plan. Replacing the Queensland Building Services Authority with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission is a very big step towards resolving disputes in a more timely and balanced manner and creating a more efficient and effective industry for all involved. I commend the minister for introducing this legislation. I look forward to watching the transformation of the industry into the very best in Australia.