




Speech By  
**Mark Boothman**

**MEMBER FOR THEODORE**

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**BUILDING INDUSTRY FAIRNESS (SECURITY OF PAYMENT) AND OTHER  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (2.32 pm): I rise to speak on the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. I will keep my comments reasonably brief today but I feel I had to speak on this bill because I have a fair few subcontractors and a lot of builders in my electorate and over the years they have expressed their concerns about what is actually transpiring in the industry. Everybody deserves to get paid for a fair day's work. LNP members and I am sure government members all agree with this. We deserve to get paid for a fair day's work, but there are some who withhold pay from their subcontractors.

I was dealing with an issue to do with an electrician recently. Due to unforeseen circumstances surrounding COVID, it came to his attention that he was going to be out of pocket by almost \$100,000. There was nothing sinister or anything like that; he had just purchased a lot of equipment for his electrical business and unfortunately when COVID hit it hurt his bottom dollar. Most of the businesses in my electorate are small to medium sized businesses and a lot of them employ only a few people. Therefore, they have reputations they have to live by because they get their jobs on that reputation.

I have some very good and very proud builders in my area, but they feel that some of the ideas that have been put forward by the government will make it difficult for them to exist. There will be extra red tape and extra paperwork. As I said, a lot of them are mum-and-dad builders. They are individuals who struggle to keep their costs down. It should be noted that the vast majority of individual builders are doing the right thing; however, there is always a small minority of rotten apples that hurt the industry. One of the complaints I get from builders and subcontractors is that they feel that a lot of the time the QBCC is a toothless tiger and that it struggles with its role as the overarching body. The member for Burnett certainly highlighted that from the auditor's report.

A builder of many years decided to sell his business and pack up shop. He said that he got to a point where he was absolutely fed up with dealing with the QBCC when it came to individuals who did not want to pay him. For instance, someone made up a story about an issue to do with a shower door and so they blocked their final payment. This is a real problem that builders face. He said that, whilst the QBCC would support the claims of the customer, the poor old builder had to go out there on numerous occasions to try to fix the problem but was denied access many times. He was absolutely frustrated with the process so he gave up. He eventually said that there was no point continuing in that trade if that was his future. He has two younger sons who were keen to get into the building trade, but he has done his best to talk them out of it. As mentioned by other members in this chamber, the building trade is one of the cornerstones of our economy and is worth \$46 billion to our economy. Those figures were taken back in 2017-18.

It is crucially important that we get this right. A lot of builders have said to me that the additional red tape will only hurt them in the long run. There should be far tougher prosecutions for those who do the wrong thing. What also needs to be looked at is the way some customers treat builders and try to deny payments. That is something that the government and all parties should be looking into. There

are obviously rotten apples out there, but fundamentally the vast majority of builders do the right thing by their customers and their subcontractors. We need to make sure there is fairness in the system to ensure that the construction industry in this state remains profitable and very strong for years to come.