



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Dickson Electorate: Home Insulation Program

SPEECH

Monday, 21 June 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Monday, 21 June 2010
Page 6006
Questioner
Speaker Dutton, Peter, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr DUTTON (Dickson) (4.06 pm)—Today I wish to highlight the ongoing farce and tragedy surrounding the Labor government's bungled roof insulation scheme. The fallout from the scheme, which is just one of Mr Rudd's long list of broken promises, has left legitimate small businesses with great uncertainty and little hope of surviving into the future. We all remember when Mr Rudd got out his notepad and pen and told installers that he had 'got it' and would assist them by fixing the scheme. That promise stands in stark contrast to Labor's treatment of Mr Covill, a Dickson installer who now faces great uncertainty after investing in the industry. After Mr Rudd stopped the scheme dead in its tracks, Mr Covill contacted the minister for assistance. To this day, the only reply he ever received was an acknowledgement via email that the minister had received his letter. The minister has not even had the decency to respond adequately to my own inquiries on Mr Covill's behalf. On 9 April, I wrote to the minister seeking assistance for Mr Covill. Despite chasing up the matter several times and highlighting the urgency of the case, I received a response on 19 May merely noting that the department had responded directly to Mr Covill. Instructively, there was no copy of that piece of correspondence. However, after double-checking with Mr Covill, I can inform the House that he only ever received an email of acknowledgement. He has never received anything by way of guidance or assistance.

Mrs McCallum of Green Rebate Insulation at Brendale is another Dickson constituent who has been trying, without success, to get assistance from the minister. Green Rebate Insulation is owed \$180,000 by the Rudd government for the work they did under Mr Rudd's scheme. Month after month, they have contacted the government without any response or result. This inaction filters through to the whole business community and ultimately it is affecting local families and workers. For example, Mrs Pascoe of PR Print in Lawnton waits patiently for \$30,000 for work she did for an installer, which in turn is waiting for the government to pay for its past work. While the government does nothing to pay the installers or to settle the accounts it encouraged setting up, other companies bear the debts installers owe to them and so on.

The list of examples is endless. Baigrie Electricians of Petrie helped the government inspect homes following the insulation debacle. Despite the fact that they fixed several dangerous faults—and potentially saved lives—the government cannot even manage to pay the \$6,732 they are owed for their services. This government just keeps getting worse. While the insulation scheme may no longer be front-page news, the reality is that this fiasco continues on in the background. It continues to impact the lives of local businesses and local families in Dickson. If the government cannot manage to put free insulation into roofs, there is no way the Australian people can trust it to manage anything more serious, like hospitals or the economy. Imagine a second term Labor government—think Anna Bligh.