

**BUILDING PRACTITIONERS ACCREDITATION
(MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2008 (No. 21)**

Second Reading

Mr HARRISS (Huon - 2R) - I move –

That the bill be now read the second time.

Mr President, this bill authorises a registered company auditor to audit the financial records of the Tasmanian Compliance Corporation - the TCC. The auditor is to provide a report of the audit to the minister within 14 days of having completed the audit. Prior to this, the auditor must provide a draft of his report to each member, director and employee of the TCC and invite them to comment within 28 days.

Mr President, a significant purpose of the audit is to determine the amount of funds, if any, set aside by the TCC for the purpose of dealing with complaints or for other contingencies, and which have not been used for those purposes. The audit is to determine whether the TCC delivered a merchantable service to accredited building practitioners.

Further, the audit is to identify all amounts of accreditation fees paid to the TCC by building practitioners during the 2006-07 financial year. Following this, the auditor is to certify the amount he considers fairly represents the cost to the TCC of accrediting building practitioners from 1 July 2006 to 31 October 2006 and if a merchantable service was not delivered, the auditor is to recommend if any money should be refunded to building practitioners and to the Director of Building Control.

Mr President, another matter the auditor is required to take account of is the \$143 239 already paid to the Crown and the transfer of certain property by the TCC consequential to the deed executed on 25 September 2006.

The bill is a simple process to introduce a full audit of the TCC's finances up until the time the Government took over responsibility for accrediting building practitioners. The auditor can then determine if there are funds the TCC retained which ought to be forfeited to the Crown for the purposes of accrediting building practitioners during the 2006-07 financial year, together with any investigations of complaints undertaken by the Director of Building Control during that year.

Mr President, I only add a comment at this stage during the second reading and that is that there are two significant differences to the bill which was previously before the House and agreed, to my recollection, without dissent the last time a bill similar to this was before the House.

The two significant differences are that rather than empowering the Auditor-General to conduct the audit, this new bill proposes that a registered company auditor to

be appointed for that process. Secondly, rather than all moneys being returned to the Director of Building Control in the event that the audit discovers that a good and merchantable service was not delivered, that there is a provision in this bill for money to be returned to accredited building practitioners through the Director of Building Control gathering up those funds on the recommendation of the auditor and those moneys being deposited in the special deposits and trust fund. This would interest the Treasurer because, clearly, we cannot initiate money bills in this House. There is a provision within the bill to facilitate that process, and then it will be up to the Government, at a later time, to conduct those administrative processes and for the Parliament to make the appropriation.

Mr President, with those words of my own, in addition to that which has been circulated to honourable members, I commend the bill to the Council.