

BUILDING MANAGEMENT AND WORKS — BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION —
SUBCONTRACTOR NONPAYMENT

818. Hon KATE DOUST to the Minister for Small Business:

This question was originally referred to the Minister for Finance; we made a mistake, and it has now been directed to the Minister for Small Business.

I refer the minister to his media statement of 17 October outlining that the government would be moving to protect subcontractors and the appointment of an independent investigator to investigate the claims of subcontractors.

- (1) When did the minister first raise this issue with the Small Business Commissioner?
- (2) By what date must the commissioner appoint the independent investigator?
- (3) On what date will the investigation open?
- (4) On what date will the investigation close?
- (5) What are the terms of reference for this investigation?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

This is interesting timing. I understand a debate about this very matter has been held and concluded in another place. It is a pity the Deputy Leader of the Opposition did not have the benefit of this question before that happened. I guess politics comes first with you lot, and you worry about checking the facts later!

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Thank you so much for some notice of this question.

Hon Ljiljana Ravlich: You're so precious!

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Love you, too, petal!

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The issue was raised with the Small Business Commissioner previously. I met with him in person on 17 October 2012.
- (2) As soon as practicable.
- (3) The investigation will formally commence once the independent investigator has been appointed. In the interim, subcontractors are encouraged to register their details with the Small Business Development Corporation, and, once appointed, the investigator will contact them to discuss their individual case. I encourage the member who asked the question to advise me of any cases she wishes to bring to my attention, because I do not think she has done so at all.

Hon Kate Doust interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Not once. Have you referred one to me?

Hon Kate Doust: When the investigation —

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Even one? Not one!

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think the minister is coming to the end of his answer.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Certainly, Mr President. These people have shown no interest in this matter until very recently. The answer continues —

- (4) It is expected that the investigator will report back to the minister in December 2012.
- (5) Draft terms of reference have been developed and will be finalised with the input of the investigator once he or she is appointed.