



Speech by

**DON LIVINGSTONE**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST**

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Hansard 10 May 2002

**RESIDENTIAL SERVICES [ACCOMMODATION] BILL**

**Mr LIVINGSTONE** (Ipswich West—ALP) (12.20 p.m.): I rise in support of the Residential Services (Accommodation) Bill. In so doing, I congratulate the minister, the director-general and their staff on their work in order to present this bill today. While there are many good operators in this sector, there has also been a history of poor operators exploiting vulnerable people. Many residents in the residential services industry live in accommodation that is poorly maintained and receive minimal services for their money. Quite often some of the establishments they live in could be better described as hovels. Currently there is little legislative protection and these people are open to exploitation, neglect and abuse.

This legislation is one of a number of measures that the Beattie government has undertaken to significantly improve this situation. The other key legislative measure is the Residential Services (Accreditation) Bill, which has been introduced by the Hon. Merri Rose, Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading. The accreditation bill will establish standards for the provision of residential services in Queensland. It will also set up a mandatory accreditation system for the industry. This scheme will provide for and encourage continuous improvement in the delivery of residential services. It will be a long-term driver of change and it will significantly improve the quality of service in the sector.

The accreditation bill will support and assist the many good operators in the industry by providing them with a framework within which to operate. Many operators have worked with government agencies for the improvement of this sector and their efforts are greatly appreciated. The accreditation bill also sets minimum standards that operators will have to meet. They will be given a period of time in which to do so, but they will certainly have to do a lot better.

While the accreditation bill will drive improvement in the medium to long term, the accommodation bill will immediately address some basic accommodation issues. This bill sets out the accommodation rights and responsibilities of both residents and service providers. It also puts in place practical mechanisms to give these rights meaning. It introduces measures such as written agreements, standard house rules, rules about entry, procedures for dealing with breaches of agreements and dispute resolution procedures. Together, these bills will provide a sound legislative basis on which to drive improvements in the sector.

However, legislation is only one element within the overall strategy to improve the industry. I understand that a range of resident support measures are under consideration. Such measures would include enhancement of the delivery of basic services and support to residents. This would include improvements and enhancements to existing health services, disability support services and services which provide advice and support in relation to accommodation. At the same time, consideration is also being given to measures to support operators in the sector in the provision of adequate services. Building on existing assistance to develop sound business systems through model operational policies and procedures, measures under consideration include access to expert advice, some targeted financial assistance, ongoing consultation during implementation of the legislation and monitoring of industry viability in the context of maintaining an adequate supply of affordable housing.

This legislation, in conjunction with measures under consideration for resident and industry support, forms a robust framework to ensure that residents have access to

accommodation and associated services which are of an acceptable standard. I commend the bill to the House.