



Speech by

**CAROLYN MALE**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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Hansard 12 November 2003

### **PUBLIC HOUSING**

**Ms MALE** (Glass House—ALP) (11.08 p.m.): Tonight I wish to bring to the attention of the House an issue that affects people in my electorate: access to affordable housing and access to departmental housing. I have had many discussions with the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing about this issue, and I want to put on record my appreciation for his ongoing commitment to increasing the state budget for public housing and lobbying for additional resources.

I turn to the Beattie Labor government's record. Since the Beattie government came to office in 1998 we have spent just under \$2 billion on new housing construction, maintenance and upgrades and other housing support services in Queensland. This financial year we have committed more than \$528 million to the state's Housing budget—an 11.3 per cent increase on last year's budget—supporting housing needs at a time when federal funding for new construction is shrinking and the Howard government has implemented short-sighted rental assistance policies that do not support people who cannot find an affordable home to rent. Queensland's Housing budget is now \$220 million greater than what it was when we came to office and we have implemented a range of legislation and policies to protect vulnerable Queenslanders and increase the supply of affordable housing.

We are the first state to legislate to protect people from unfair black-listing on tenancy databases, and we have developed a statewide coordinated response to homelessness and are working with the private sector to develop new and innovative ways to deliver affordable housing. In the budget there was \$171 million in public housing capital works, which would fund the construction of 300 public housing dwellings and complete work on another 260 that are currently under construction. There were upgrade works to the Urban Renewal Program of over \$100 million, \$87 million for the public rental maintenance program, and also there was money for the Home Assist/Secure Scheme, which is operated by more than 40 local nonprofit groups across Queensland.

Also, yesterday I noted that the minister announced the local government housing resource kit, which will help councils make informed decisions about housing needs in their area. Let us look at the National Party. Did the Nationals discuss these issues at their state conference in August this year? I believe not. Did the Nationals back the Queensland government in its calls for a fair deal in the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement? No! Did the Nationals ask the federal government to reinstate the \$300 million they have ripped out of public housing in Queensland? No! Do the Nationals have a comprehensive fully funded policy on public housing funding? No!

The federal government's rental assistance package is failing Queensland families. In Glass House new housing is being built in Caboolture, Landsborough and Maleny to add to the housing stock that already exists. I know more needs to be done, and the minister has tirelessly raised the fact that more needs to be done. The National Party in my area has suddenly started talking about housing issues. Their hypocrisy is breathtaking. They refused to stand up and be counted when it was needed on the issue of proper funding for public housing, but with an election just around the corner they very cynically and suddenly pretend that they have an interest in affordable public housing and public housing stocks. If they were serious the first thing they would do would be to ask for the extra \$300 million back that was ripped out. If they were serious, they would actually show that they care about the community and want to actually help, instead of just the empty, baseless rhetoric that we always hear from them.

Time expired.