



Speech by

JO-ANN MILLER

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

Hansard 11 September 2003

HOUSING BILL

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (11.45 a.m.): I rise to support the Housing Bill 2003. The bill has two key objectives: to improve access of Queenslanders to safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing and to help build sustainable communities. The Department of Housing is one of the most important departments in my electorate. It provides detached three and four bedroom houses and seniors units to my people. The urban renewal program has ensured that the houses have been jazzed up with great paint colours, new kitchens, new bathrooms and the provisions of decks and verandahs and carports. We also now have fences which is very good.

Just taking the point of the member for Nanango, one of the complaints that I get in my electorate now is that the Department of Housing houses are, in fact, of a better standard and better quality than some of the private houses in our community. I think that is quite common throughout the areas including the electorate of Noosa.

I must say that the fences, even though it might only be at a very low cost in the housing budget, that have been erected in my particular area have ensured that my people have privacy which is very important to them. My people would like to thank the minister and the Beattie Labor government for the urban renewal program which is still under way in Goodna, Dinmore and Bundamba. They would also like to thank Harvey and his team because they are absolute local legends.

Of course, the department does much more than the urban renewal program. It really does help build sustainable communities. The community renewal program has been a godsend in the Goodna-Gailes and also the Dinmore-Riverview area. By using this money wisely, my community feels better about themselves and their neighbours and they feel that they really do belong to safe and secure communities. They now have hope. Together with the economic development that we have in our area, they will have access to jobs and training and a better quality of life. Of course, the Department of Housing and many other departments and agencies greatly assisted my community only recently when the Riviera caravan park closed down. I would like to thank all the officers of the Department of Housing for their work in assisting our people get decent housing.

Decent, safe, secure, affordable housing is a basic right of all Queenslanders. It is a basic right of all Australians. The Commonwealth government should fund it properly instead of being mean and tricky with its budgetary commitments. It is easy to be mean with public housing when interest rates are low, but when the wheels fall off the cart of housing, when the interest rates blow-out, when people are finding it hard, even impossible, to stay in their own homes, where will the federal Tory government hide then, because the public housing situation will be much worse?

Perhaps then the Kirribilli King will come to visit the Bundamba battlers, but I will not hold my breath because the Tories simply do not care about housing, the homeless, the poor and the disadvantaged. I understand that the federal Tory government ripped us off to the tune of some \$96 million this year. That is what it ripped us off in terms of the public housing budget. It is an absolute disgrace.

Mrs Carryn Sullivan: There's a lot less houses for the people.

Mrs MILLER: There are a lot less houses all over the state and it is disgraceful. Whilst the Kirribilli King is sitting there on the Sydney foreshore and an empty Lodge is in Canberra, I have families with up to 10 kids living in three bedroom houses because the federal government will not fund public housing properly. I would like the Prime Minister to come to my electorate and talk to these families and see how he would go living—

A government member interjected.

Mrs MILLER: He should talk to some of the families in my electorate and see how hard it is; some family members have to eat outside because there is not enough room inside the house. It is terrible. There are cases where the lounge room, which is supposed to be for the recreation of families, contains triple-decker beds. Let him explain that to the people in my electorate. I call on our shadow minister, Mr Hopper, to hop down to Canberra pretty quickly to try to retrieve this \$96 million, because we need it. We desperately need it. I am proud to belong to a government that looks after public housing. It never forgets its heartland. I thank the minister for the bill and commend it to the House.