



Speech by

JULIE ATTWOOD

Member for MOUNT OMMANEY

Hansard 10 September 2003

HOUSING BILL

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.08 p.m.): I rise to support the Housing Bill, which aims to improve the access of Queenslanders to safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing and to help build sustainable communities. The legislation will also establish a more flexible basis for the department to provide housing services to those in need throughout the state, to modernise the legislative framework under which the department will conduct its current and future business, to create a regulatory scheme for funded organisations to ensure a high standard of service delivery and the proper protection of tenants, and to give the department the capacity to monitor and enforce specific obligations owed by direct clients and funded organisations.

The general purpose and structure of the 1945 act, which has been amended many times, remains essentially unchanged. However, it is very restrictive in terms of approval structures for the administration of current departmental programs. It is important that the current activities of the Department of Housing are reflected in effective and relevant legislation. The Housing Bill 2003 will provide a framework for the department's current activities and future role. It repeals the State Housing Act 1945 and abolishes the Queensland Housing Commission, vesting the commission's assets and liabilities in the state of Queensland.

The government faces significant challenges in meeting the housing needs of Queenslanders. There are long waiting lists in all areas for affordable housing. Corinda—a suburb in my electorate in Mount Ommaney—is much in demand and a number of seniors units and affordable accommodation units have been constructed there over the last few years. A number of months ago I officially opened a modern unit complex in Hassall Street. All of the tenants are delighted with their brand-new accommodation.

The main objects of this legislation are to improve the access of Queenslanders to safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing and to help build sustainable communities. The government's vision for housing promotes secure, affordable and appropriate housing in diverse, cohesive and sustainable communities as fundamental to a good quality of life for families and individuals. This vision for good housing outcomes recognises that housing enables people to participate in the social and economic life of the community. Good housing outcomes in sustainable communities provide a healthy environment in which to bring up children, improve health and are the basis for taking up education, training and job opportunities.

This vision also recognises that housing assistance helps to reduce the incidence of after-housing poverty for households. It is so important that the people of Queensland are provided with all these opportunities. The legislation will provide a more contemporary and flexible system for the administration of Queensland Housing programs and services. It will also support the state government's vision and broader role to influence the wider housing system to ensure that it works more effectively in responding to the housing needs of Queenslanders.

The minister should be congratulated for enabling the state government to continue to provide public housing grants and loans to those in need of those services. As a result of this bill, there will be a greater accountability in the public housing system, which provides approximately 52,000 dwellings. In the community housing system, that assists around 6,000 households at any one time. I commend the bill to the House.