



Speech by

LINDY NELSON-CARR

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Hansard 11 September 2003

HOUSING BILL

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (12.30 p.m.): Thank goodness for the member for Rockhampton, the Minister for Housing, whose Housing Bill 2003 I support today. Homelessness can be caused in a number of ways, but it is usually not because of choice, and this bill will go a long way to improving access for Queenslanders to safe, secure and affordable housing. This is at a time when the Howard government is hell-bent on limiting the states' and territories' abilities to raise revenue. The Howard government is the highest taxing government in Australian history, and yet housing affordability remains a dream for so many. He blames the states and territories for the stamp duty imposed on housing transfers, but this is just another attempt to cloud the truth.

Stamp duty is minor compared to the costs of buying a new house now that we have the Commonwealth's added burden of GST. Stamp duty is about one-tenth of what home buyers have to pay in GST—and Queensland is better off than New South Wales and Victoria. How far will Howard go in squeezing us dry so that our narrow revenue base is deprived in our key areas, including public housing?

Minister Swarten has been warning Queenslanders and this place about the Commonwealth's deplorable track record re affordable housing, and Howard's latest political stunt announcing a Productivity Commission inquiry into affordable housing would be a joke if it were not so serious, because it will completely ignore the battlers who will never own their own homes. It will not look at increased private rental costs which force people out and away from services now, and nor will it address the erosion of cheaper rentals. Many ordinary families do not own their own homes nor do they have an investment property. Howard's first home owner grant has pushed property prices up and advantages people buying \$600,000 homes at the same rate as people buying \$120,000 homes.

Mrs Lavarch interjected.

Ms NELSON-CARR: I take that interjection.

Mr Mickel: Wait till the interest rates go up.

Ms NELSON-CARR: That is right. There is no extra money in Howard's budget for public housing. The shortage of housing affordability is worse in regional and rural areas.

The Beattie government's commitment to delivering for those most in need is evident in the minister's annual funding increases to Housing, yet the Howard government has decreased funding. I congratulate the minister again for continuing to develop programs and policies directed towards those battling to own a home and those who want to rent. Innovative partnerships with the private sector can go a long way to providing affordable housing for those who would normally find it most difficult.

I would like to congratulate Peter Stephens from Ferry Real Estate in Hermit Park for his commitment to our government's selling off of some of our housing stock. He embraced the concept, he has kept me in the loop, and this year in Vincent we have sold over 18 public houses to people desperately looking for affordable properties. This does a number of positive things to a suburb like Vincent, which has suffered significantly in the past from being a public housing estate. Until the Beattie government, Vincent's social problems were significant. A new sense of pride is being created, with community renewal, urban renewal and affordable housing which are 100 per cent owner occupied. I congratulate the minister on this innovative scheme and commend the bill to the House.