



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Public Housing

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.40 am): The Leader of the House and minister for housing is in Sydney today addressing the *Australian Financial Review's* housing congress. The reason he is doing that is to send a clear message that we want more money for public housing. As we all know, over the past 10 years there has been a dramatic increase in the cost of housing, squeezing many middle to low income earners out of the private market. This has placed extreme pressure on social housing authorities across the country as supply cannot meet demand.

This morning Mr Schwarten will be proposing to some of the country's key leaders on housing issues a new housing product called Home Link which connects government assistance and private investment. Home Link provides a strong rate of return for private investors while increasing the supply of private housing at more affordable rents for thousands of Australian families. Using the Home Link model, 1,000 new rental units could be provided for \$31 million compared with the \$337 million investment required if the government was to provide this accommodation directly.

The reality is that no state government in Australia has that sort of money. We are already stretched beyond our means in this regard. In Queensland alone a record 1,800 new applicants put their names down for public housing in the last month.

The current federal government spends \$2 billion a year on rental assistance, but it is clear that this investment is not addressing Australia's housing crisis. The private market is failing. While my government accepts—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Can members please keep their voices down. It is difficult to hear.

Mr BEATTIE: I would have thought that public housing was a matter of importance to all members, Mr Speaker. While my government accepts the reality that the federal government is not going to change its rent assistance policy, we believe that the only way forward is to work with property investors to fill the current void in the private market.

Mr Rowell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Hinchinbrook, please have some manners if nothing else.

Mr BEATTIE: Through Home Link the Queensland government calculates that property investors will get a return of around six per cent, which in today's market is very attractive. At the same time the market rent for someone on an income of \$380 a week will reduce from around 50 per cent of their income to 43 per cent, which is a \$30 a week saving.

Housing is the cornerstone of people's lives and all levels of government have a moral obligation to sit down at the table and address the chronic housing problem that is affecting communities across Australia. Once again, my government has shown leadership on a national issue which has been put into the too-hard basket by the federal government. I now table a copy of the speech the minister will be delivering in Sydney this morning. I highlight to the House that it has full cabinet approval and is the government's position.