



Speech by

Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

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RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AND ROOMING ACCOMMODATION BILL

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (8.32 pm): I rise to briefly contribute to this debate and to indicate my very fulsome support for this outstanding piece of reforming Labor legislation. In its action of repealing the Residential Tenancies Act and the Residential Services (Accommodation) Act, the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Bill which the minister has brought before the House, as the member for Kallangur noted, marks an appropriate, strong Labor government response to the marked changes in the nature of the rental market. It ensures that there is a strong legislative framework that responds to those changes. It provides safety and security for the people living in rental accommodation and also a strong, secure and stable environment for those people who are investors in the rental market.

I make particular note that this legislation is of significant importance to the electors of Stafford because of the high proportion of people who live in rental accommodation in the Stafford electorate whom I have the great pleasure of representing in this House. The 2006 census reveals that 39.1 per cent of private dwellings in the electorate of Stafford are rented. That compares with a figure of 27.2 per cent of private dwellings across the whole of Australia being rented. That reveals how significant and important this matter is to the people who reside in my electorate. It is vitally important that I represent them and their concerns in this House.

Reflecting on the earlier comments of my colleague the member for Woodridge about the high proportion of people living in rental accommodation in her electorate—and I know there are a number of other members in the House who share similar sets of circumstances—we all need to ensure that the needs of people living in rental accommodation are provided for and supported. That is where the particular measures contained within this legislation and the reform that it represents, particularly the measures that provide for that prohibition on rent bidding, are particularly important. The most significant one and the one about which I have received the most particular feedback from people in the community is this measure about restricting the frequency of rent increases to no more than once every six months.

While I would echo the comments made by the member for Woodridge about a number of people from my electorate who have approached me who would like to see some sort of measure about a cap on rents, I do appreciate that that is not a proposition that would provide solutions to the problem of available accommodation in our community. Therefore, the measures that are included in this legislation providing a restraint on the frequency of rental increases are appropriate measures and represent a measured response. They are indicative of the work and time that the minister has put into the legislation and also in terms of the consultation that the members for Kurwongbah and Ashgrove have conducted into the development of this legislation that is before the House tonight.

I want to thank those people who have contributed to this appropriate and fantastic measure that responds to the needs of people living in rental accommodation in Queensland in 2008. I am sure it lays a great set of ground rules and groundwork for a fair environment for renters and for landlords into the future. On that note, I commend the bill to the House.