



Speech by
Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 27 October 2009

BRISBANE HOUSING CO.

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (10.16 pm): On Thursday, 15 October I was very pleased to join the federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan; the federal Minister for Housing, Tanya Plibersek; the federal member for Brisbane, Arch Bevis; the Brisbane Housing Co. Chair, John McAuliffe; and the CEO, David Cant, to celebrate the BHC's landmark project at Newstead in Brisbane—just down the road from where I live. When completed, the 95 apartments at Newstead will include 30 National Rental Affordability Scheme homes, 26 social housing dwellings funded by the Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan and 39 privately owned units. In fact, it will be the first of its type ever built in Queensland and, my understanding is, almost in Australia where there is a combination of social housing and private dwelling all in the one project. It truly is a great example of how this type of economic stimulus is supporting jobs not only in the construction industry but also during a global economic recession. At least 350 jobs are being created with the support of this program.

It was great to represent Minister Struthers there. I congratulate the Brisbane Housing Co. on its vision in getting this terrific project off the ground. This project shows the great results that can be achieved when all three levels of government work together with local industry to provide affordable housing. I also thank Michael McNab, the builder of this great project.

I will give a little bit of history. The Brisbane Housing Co. was set up in 2002 as a joint initiative between the state government and the Brisbane City Council with its first chairman of the board, Kevin Seymour. It is now an independent company providing much needed affordable housing throughout Brisbane. In my electorate alone there are 10 BHC developments and managed complexes, with two more currently under construction and another two in the planning stage. It was set up with great vision by the state government with an initial equity injection of \$60 million. The majority of that money came from the state government together with the Brisbane City Council. It had planned for 400 dwellings aimed at rents at 25 per cent below the market rate for those who cannot afford full market prices.

Seven years later, under the chairmanship of John McAuliffe, we now see that a company that started employing four people now employs 20. It has delivered in excess of 700 homes and by 2012 expects to have 1,200 homes in occupation. This model is a great model. It is based on the charity concept. It is delivering real homes in the social and affordable housing sector for people much in need not only in my electorate but also around Brisbane and Queensland. It is a credit to those with the vision to set it up. I commend the board and the staff of BHC.