



Speech by


Hon. Dr Bruce Flegg

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Hansard Wednesday, 20 June 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Social Housing

 **Hon. BS FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (2.26 pm): There can be no doubt that Queensland's public housing system is in crisis. We are looking at a position where rents will no longer cover maintenance and administration and there is not one dollar left to cover the construction of new properties. In the current financial year, we are looking at a housing deficit of \$50 million. In 2007-08 that was a surplus of \$50 million. As I have said, when the Bligh government left office there was not one dollar in the forward estimates for the construction of even one new house. There are 30,000 Queensland families currently waiting and, on our present figures, we are looking at a deficit in housing of \$140 million a year by 2015. This is a toxic cocktail bequeathed by Labor to Queenslanders who are unable to afford their own homes.

Last week I announced the first of a series of major reforms aimed at reversing this trend and putting the system back on a sustainable footing. Our prime responsibility is to house people who cannot house themselves. We are about putting a roof over Queenslanders' heads. A decade ago the system was housing 9,000 new families a year. This year it is only 3,000; next year it will be down to a pitiful 2,000 families. Our first step is to address the biggest single factor that is causing the system to haemorrhage, and that is underoccupancy. We estimate that there are currently 9,000 public housing properties across Queensland with two or more bedrooms more than are needed. It is a nonsense to be housing single people in three- and four-bedroom homes while 30,000 Queensland families cannot be housed at all. The rents are based on income. There is no price signal for people when they need to downsize their homes, and we are looking to much better match the capacity and make the most of what we have so we are able to house as many people as possible.

The second element that we need to address is what we estimate to be the thousands of people living in Queensland public housing who are not registered and who pay no rent at all. Each person who is undeclared—many of them are in the workforce—who is paying absolutely no rent at all, is costing somebody else their opportunity to be housed. That is why we have taken the actions we have taken and forwarded the information to public housing tenants.