




Speech by

Hon. Dr Bruce Flegg

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Hansard Tuesday, 10 July 2012

MOTION: PUBLIC HOUSING

 **Hon. BS FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (5.44 pm): Tonight we have been witness to why there are only seven members sitting opposite. Not only have they destroyed the funding and sustainability of public housing, they have not learnt their lesson. Let me explain to the House the state that public housing was left in by those opposite. For the first time that I am aware, there is not one dollar of capital works from the state budget to build even one new house here in Queensland. What is more, the previous government managed the properties they had so incompetently that the portfolio loses money to the point at which those opposite had been selling public houses to fund the losses in the portfolio. What sort of business would be selling their properties to fund their own administrative incompetence?

Nowhere in their motion tonight is there any mention of the 31,000 Queensland families, or 70,000 Queenslanders, who are on our waiting list and the 10,000 families who are homeless because of those opposite and their absolute incompetence. A system that a decade ago could house 9,000 families a year in government housing next year will house only 2,000 families. That is the rate at which people die or enter nursing homes from public housing. Under the government of those opposite, the only way people on that waiting list had any chance of getting their housing needs met was to wait for someone to die.

The members of the Labor Party opposite have run a disgusting fear campaign. They have put out press releases suggesting that people would be thrown out of their homes or that we were trying to run public housing as some sort of profit-making business. They left public housing with 9,000 underoccupied houses, with around 20,000 empty rooms, while they allowed 10,000 homeless families to be turned away. They did absolutely nothing about the many people who live in public housing but who are not declared and, therefore, pay no rent in order to fund the housing for those on the waiting list.

What we did was to show people in public housing the respect of seeking their views. There was no respect from those opposite, but we showed them the respect. I can tell members that I am very grateful for the people who responded. Around 20 per cent of people made a written response to that letter. That is an enormous response. Of those, 62 per cent indicated their preference to move to smaller accommodation to help us solve the problem of how we house those 31,000 families—62 per cent. In fact, even on the measure of sharing—and I notice the members opposite are making great play of their petition and that about 300 people have signed it, which is probably the membership of the ALP branches—double that number indicated that they were happy to share their homes. Imagine if I had sent that letter to the 31,000 families on the waiting list who are not even important enough to the ALP to be mentioned in their motion today. I had a look at the waiting list in the electorates of Woodridge and 787 in the seat of Inala. I move the following amendment—

I move that all words after 'House' be deleted and the following words inserted:

'notes that the former Bligh Labor government is responsible for the ongoing crisis in the Queensland public housing system, including

- Diverting funds from the sale of over \$48 million worth of housing stock in the 2010-11 financial year to pay for maintenance and administration rather than additional housing, including leaving no funding in the forward estimates to build one new unit of public housing;
- A waiting list of 30,000 Queensland families who languish on the register waiting for access to public housing; and
- Gross mismanagement of public housing that requires urgent action to address the underoccupancy crisis crippling the public housing system with some 20,000 bedrooms vacant and underoccupied.

Further, that the House notes that 62 per cent of those public housing tenants surveyed recently support the Newman government's reforms to encourage tenants with unoccupied bedrooms to consider downsizing.