



Speech by

# Hon. Dr Bruce Flegg


MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Hansard Thursday, 2 August 2012

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Public Housing

 **Hon. BS FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (9.56 am): Members will be aware that I have put in place major public housing changes to try to address the crisis and make public housing sustainable in Queensland. Among those initiatives, I put in place an amnesty for public housing tenants to own up to any extra people who have been living in their subsidised homes rent free. Public housing rents are calculated on a household's income, so with not a single dollar in our budget for new public housing it is important that we identify all possible revenue.

I can advise the House today that more than 2,300 extra household members had been declared by tenants before the amnesty closed on Friday, 27 July. That is right—2,300 people who had been living rent free in public housing under the previous administration came forward. This has been a significant success in moving towards sustainable public housing in this state. The department is progressively processing the undeclared occupant forms so it is too early to calculate the exact amount of unpaid rent that this represents, but it is millions of dollars that should have been going into public housing and from now on will go into public housing. A very conservative estimate is that it is \$5 million—it is likely to be much more—per year each and every year. Some of these households have actually admitted to having up to four extra undeclared people living in their subsidised housing.

I believe the House and the community will join with me in welcoming the uptake of the amnesty by so many public housing tenants, but I regret to say there are thousands still living rent free in Queensland public housing. Part of our reform agenda to make public housing sustainable means that those who did not come forward will now in the future be required to pay back rent. These initiatives are going to help put roofs over the heads of many of the 30,000 or so households on the waiting list for social housing here in Queensland. Around 10,000 of those households are technically homeless. Whilst I have the opportunity, I want to assure public housing tenants that the rumours from ALP members opposite about forced evictions is nothing more than scaremongering and an attempt to exploit a very genuine effort on the part of this government to fix the mess that those opposite left in public housing and to make it sustainable to house desperately needy Queenslanders into the future.