




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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**QUEENSLAND BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (9.04 pm): I rise in the House tonight to support the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. I would like to thank the Minister for Housing and Public Works, the Hon. Tim Mander, for bringing this important bill before the House. I would also like to thank the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee and in particular the chairman, my friend and colleague the Hon. Howard Hobbs, the member for Warrego, who will be sorely missed in this House after the next election. The committee spent a lot of time reviewing this bill and I note that the committee recommends that the bill be passed.

I welcome this bill and the role it plays in addressing the legislative amendments required to implement the next stage of reforms from the government's 10-point action plan to overhaul the Queensland Building Services Authority and building regulation in Queensland. This review into the BSA was one of our government's earliest promises. The 10-point plan which resulted from the review has been instrumental in establishing the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, the QBCC, to replace the old BSA.

The minister knows that I have been a strong advocate for better building regulation, and the review and further public consultation revealed serious shortfalls with the BSA. The minister will recall that we met with numerous builders right here in Brisbane and we also held meetings with local builders and, more importantly to some extent for my electorate, subcontractors who have been affected in the great electorate of Nanango. I met with builders such as Darrin Kefford, who is always an extremely strong advocate on behalf of the subcontractors. He is always keen to remind me that we really need to get this reform right.

Our government has identified the building and construction sector as one of our four pillars of economic growth, and it is through bills such as this that we can continue to fulfil our commitment to grow the sector, cut red tape and support not only homeowners—the mums and dads, the grannies and grandads—but our builders and local subcontractors. The member for Mount Coot-tha, Saxon Rice, put it very eloquently. Quite often it is unfortunate that it is the builders who are the ones who are not paying our subbies, so we need this reform. This legislation is giving the commissioner and the commission a bit of bite, and it is about time. I use those words from the member for Mount Coot-tha—'a bit of bite'—because this is what the people in her electorate and the people in my electorate of Nanango have been waiting for. I am really pleased that this is actually the way it is.

For the remainder of my time tonight, I would like to focus on the Housing 2020 Strategy and the positive impacts these amendments will have on the social housing sector. The minister must be congratulated for the vision presented in this housing strategy. It is ambitious but it acknowledges that the public housing sector needs reform. Over the past 20 years, the needs of our tenants have changed dramatically but unfortunately the system simply has not. Our government, however, is

committed to helping people in housing stress while creating a flexible, fair and integrated system. Part of the strategy is to have 90 per cent of housing tenancies managed by the not-for-profit sector by the year 2020.

The key objective of this strategy is to achieve more efficient and effective delivery of the full range of housing services by progressively transferring the management of the department owned and managed social housing and other housing assistant functions to approved providers. Again, like almost every time I have stood in this House since I became the elected member for Nanango, I can say that this is common-sense legislation that is being brought before this House by a common-sense government—the Newman led LNP government.

The proposed amendments to the Housing Act and the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 are designed to ensure the smooth transition of public housing tenancies and other housing assistance functions to approved providers and to make sure the right arrangements, including protection for confidential client information, are in place to support the ongoing delivery of accountable and responsive services. The need for a good social housing system is extremely important. In my electorate of Nanango, I regularly receive inquiries from people who are in housing distress and who desperately need our help—from families, single parents, young men and the elderly.

I am proud to know that the changes that our government has introduced so far are helping to reduce the waiting list and to put roofs over the heads of those most vulnerable and needy people. In fact, earlier this year I announced that in the electorate of Nanango 43 extra families were able to secure a public housing home. This decreased my region's public housing wait list by 57 per cent. This is a wonderful achievement. For years upon years upon years these people were lingering on the waiting list. The previous Labor government did not care about the electorate of Nanango. They did not even know it was there. Incredible! We have been able to reduce the public housing waiting list by 57 per cent. Well done, Minister. I am very pleased with that.

This is thanks also to plenty of hard work by our housing service centres and some innovative new policies. Not only is it working in my electorate—

Mr Byrne interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON:—and the member for Rockhampton can shake his head because I am proud of the work we have done here—it is also working across the state. With more than 5,500 households moving off this waiting list in the last 12 months and another 665 places under the National Rental Affordability Scheme, this is a massive drop in the waiting list and it was due to a combination of more new dwellings, better waiting list management and greater awareness of the alternative types of housing assistance.

Under the previous Labor government what we saw was a social housing or bust mentality in which long-term government subsidised housing was seen as the only option. Under our Newman government's Housing 2020 Strategy, the emphasis is on giving people options wherever possible, helping them become self-reliant rather than remaining dependent on the taxpayers' dollars and dependent on government. Obviously there will always be people who will need social housing and for whom we have an enduring responsibility, but there are plenty of others who are perfectly capable of sustaining a private tenancy if they get the right help, and that is what the intention of this bill is all about. With those words, I would like to support this bill.