




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2020

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Ipswich, Social Housing

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.50 pm): Last week I had the great pleasure of visiting the site of a new social housing project in the Ipswich CBD which will provide 20 brand-new, affordable homes for Ipswich residents as well as support local building and construction jobs in Ipswich. When it is completed by this November, the project will have supported around 270 construction jobs—although when I was on the site, I was informed that between 500 and 600 people have actually done the induction to go on that building site which means that lots of tradies and apprentices have already gone through the induction training on that site.

Looking at its progress made me extremely proud to be a part of a government that is genuinely committed to investing in affordable social housing. Public housing has come a long way in recent years in terms of its architecture and livability. No-one should go without a roof over their heads, but for many people a house is a costly burden that chews up a large portion of their income. Housing stress is an unfortunate part of life for many working in the gig economy, for the unemployed and underemployed or for those dependent on government payments. We know that particularly now due to the COVID pandemic there are sadly more people falling into that category. That is why social housing is such a necessary investment, especially in places like Ipswich where a sizeable number of people live on low incomes and cannot afford to purchase their own homes.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to building 383 social housing properties in Ipswich over the five years to 2022. I want to thank the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Mick de Brenni, for doing an incredible job in this space. It makes me think whether the LNP will commit to delivering that volume of social housing for Ipswich. I am not confident that they would. Instead, the out-of-touch LNP have committed to splashing cash on wealthy renovators who have a spare \$150,000 lying around to carry out luxury renovations. I do not even know many middle income families in Ipswich who have a spare \$150,000 lying around for a reno.

I do know, however, that there are many households in Ipswich who live in badly run-down homes which need fixing up, but under the LNP's HomeBuilder package they do not make the cut. The HomeBuilder package, designed to create a tradie-led recovery for our COVID affected economy, will do anything but that. Its impact will be minimal in terms of the jobs it will create, and it will do nothing to boost housing affordability for those living on low to middle incomes.

Investment in social housing is sensible. It futureproofs our state, it boosts the number of affordable homes in our communities and it guarantees hundreds of jobs for our local tradies and apprentices. That is why I was so pleased to hear the Premier announce stage 2 of the Palaszczuk government's unite and recover plan this morning. Amongst a raft of welcome state government stimulus grants, we see the fabulous \$100 million Works for Tradies program, which will see an additional 215 social homes built across Queensland, including in Ipswich, and see 240 jobs created in the building and construction sector.

I am also pleased to hear about the \$10 million seniors accessibility and assistance package which will provide up to \$5,000 to seniors so they can carry out repair and maintenance works on their homes. These are people who do not have a spare \$150,000 lying around for renos but badly need to fix their homes so that they are safe to live in.

At a time when people and businesses are doing it tough through the COVID-19 crisis, I am incredibly proud to be a part of a government that is leading the way and doing whatever it takes to support jobs and create local business opportunities in Ipswich and right across Queensland. It is all part of the Queensland government's economic recovery plan. We have united as Queenslanders to smash the curve with COVID-19 and now we are ready to reopen and get on with the business of creating jobs and futureproofing our state with building and construction projects.

Investment in social housing is part of Labor's DNA. It not only helps the most financially vulnerable in our communities but kickstarts our local economic recovery effort. I know people in Ipswich who are looking forward to our new housing complex opening in November. It will be popular with local social housing residents who want to stay well connected to Ipswich. It is right in the middle of our city and it is close to health and hospital facilities, public transport and other community services. It really ticks every single box. Not only am I keen to see the completion of these 20 new homes in Ipswich come November, but I also look forward to our government's continued social housing investment in Queensland.