



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**


**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 May 2021

**MOTION**

**Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.23 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore. Last week I sat down with Dominic Venditti and Tammy Leacy from Capriccios Italian Pizza Restaurant, Leesa Tilden from Flaunt Maleny, Rick Paget from the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre and David Lowden from the Maleny Showgrounds. Members may well ask: what would bring a pizza shop owner, a fashion shop owner, a showground volunteer, the coordinator of a neighbourhood centre and a member of parliament together, apart from food? The answer is housing. Access to affordable housing—or housing full stop—has been bubbling away as an issue in the electorate of Glass House for some time, but for the past 12 months it has become critical and, as our region is renowned for, in the absence of government intervention we look for local solutions.

But let us go back a step. How have we got to where we are? The government will point out, and rightly so, that COVID-19 has had an impact on the Queensland housing market. Yes, hundreds of thousands of Australians have returned home from overseas. Each one of them has either bought a new house or has had to terminate rental agreements on their original family home. With the rise of working from home, many southerners have worked out that home does not need to be in Sydney or Melbourne; it can be on the Sunshine Coast, and who would blame them? As a result, the housing market is hot, which in turn has encouraged other home owners to sell up and make the most of the higher values. Unfortunately, many of those properties were rentals and are now no longer available for long-term renters.

Those are the short-term causes of the current crisis, but underpinning them has been a series of failures on the part of the current state government. Much of the crisis stems from the last iteration of the SEQ Regional Plan. Under the leadership of the then deputy premier Jackie Trad, the government put all of its eggs in two baskets—higher density and master planned greenfield development. Higher density takes time to consolidate properties and get approvals, usually from a council that has a town plan which does not allow it, find finance and then construct the buildings. Greenfield master planned communities simply cannot keep up with the demand. Just take a look at Stockland's Aura or AVID's Harmony. They cannot make the blocks available fast enough for hungry homebuyers. Added to this, a number of greenfield sites simply do not have the transport and road infrastructure needed to make them livable. Where is the heavy rail through Aura to Caloundra and Maroochydore? How are the new residents of Caboolture West going to get to and from work or school?

When Queensland families cannot buy into the market or find a place to rent, they turn to our state's social housing program. But that system is broken. As the *Courier-Mail* reported in January this year under the headline 'Queensland social housing waitlist explodes as government fails to keep up'—

Despite talking up its efforts, the Queensland Labor Government has effectively spent less on a ballooning social problem.

The article continues—

The Queensland Labor Government spent less per capita on social housing and increased its property portfolio by just 73 as the state's waiting list exploded to nearly 21,000 people last year.

As the coronavirus pandemic bit for the state's most marginalised, the Government spent an extra \$47 million on the problem, but didn't keep up with population growth.

The expenditure per head was \$132, down from \$135 in 2018-19, and it was the second lowest spend rate in the country, according to the 2021 Report on Government Services.

The result is a growing homelessness crisis and that is what brought Dom, Tammy, Leesa, Rick, David and I together last week. Tragically, even in a community like Maleny we have not been able to find a home for everyone who needs one. Some individuals and families have resorted to sleeping rough at the showgrounds, but state and local laws do not permit stays of longer than three nights. This small group of concerned locals discussed some solutions that the government could use right now. Here are a few that I believe could deliver results now and in the short term.

The government must begin the review of the SEQ Regional Plan now. We know that that process takes at least 12 months. Let us get it started and let us put all the options on the table—higher density, greenfield and urban expansion. Let us get on and build the infrastructure South-East Queensland needs. The federal government has coughed up. It has put billions on the table, and more with the possibility of the Olympics coming our way. The state government needs to stop blaming others and just get on with it. Build the roads and the rail our regions need. Build social housing. If the government cannot, get organisations like Coast2Bay community and affordable housing to do it. If the government wants a real quick solution, it should make immediate legislative changes to allow tiny homes and granny flats to be used for emergency and short- to medium-term housing. Let us start delivering for the people of Queensland.

*(Time expired)*