




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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ADJOURNMENT

Warrego Electorate; Housing

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.12 pm): Businesses are crying out for more staff across the south-west in my electorate. There is a 40 per cent fill rate on vacancies. For every 10 jobs businesses can fill about four of those jobs and it takes about 40 days to fill a position. There are vacancies in tourism, administration, health, diesel fitting to name a few. The Golden West Group Training Scheme tell me that they have apprenticeships and traineeships that they cannot get a single applicant for. Through the hard work and good leadership of the local governments we are seeing increased economic activity across the south-west and a diversification of local industries. There is also the expansion of businesses like Western Meat Exporters, a sheep and goat abattoir, who will employ 30 staff over the next 12 months. This expansion will generate many more jobs across the Charleville district.

However, the lack of housing is holding back the region and holding back businesses from expanding and growing and filling those jobs. For so long these communities have wanted to fight back on the population drift away from their communities but now they are being held back by the lack of housing. Prospective employees who want to move to the region are struggling to find housing. Business last week raised with me that 12 families were unable to relocate to Roma because they could not find suitable housing. In Roma the rental market is very tight. In Charleville there are more people applying for rentals than the number of properties that agents have available to rent. In St George at any one given time there are probably only about four properties to rent. There is very little vacant land to build on and single pensioners often find that there is no housing in their price range.

We are seeing this as a result of the state Labor government's poor planning and lack of investment in infrastructure, causing a regional housing crisis across the south-west. It is shameful that the state Labor government is ignoring the housing needs of regional communities and aspirational regional Queenslanders. I call on this state Labor government to release more land, build roads and work with the local governments on the water and sewage infrastructure needed for the release of more housing lots.

After six years unfortunately this state Labor government is out of ideas when it comes to dealing with housing in the regions. It is this inaction that is holding back businesses. It is holding back growth that is critical to these regional communities across the south-west. I call on the state Palaszczuk Labor government to invest in housing. They need to work with the local governments to make sure that infrastructure for water and housing is brought online. For instance, in a place like Charleville it will cost the council around \$2 million to provide the trunk infrastructure to release more land lots. We do not have a smaller communities scheme to help that council. They are absolutely desperate for that expansion to grow their population. They have good sustainable jobs, but they do not have housing to house the people who could fill the jobs.