




Speech By
Corrine McMillan

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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HOUSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (12.29 pm): Whilst I rise to support the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, I begin by taking a moment to reflect on the contribution made by the member for Everton. Some of the content shared by the member, as always, was silenced by the behaviour he chose. When I think about the psychology of that approach, the following questions emerge: is yelling reflective of a frustration with a personal lack of repertoire of language; is it a belief that the louder one yells the more others will listen; or is it a deliberate intent to intimidate? Regardless, yelling at others has never been acceptable, with the exception perhaps of a sporting context or to warn someone facing a dangerous situation. This continued pattern of behaviour—yelling in this professional environment, yelling at others including many women who sit opposite, yelling at a public servant during estimates—

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. What has this got to do with the bill?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Mansfield, you have had a little bit of leeway in terms of a response to the member. I ask that you please demonstrate relevance to the bill before the House. Continue your address but make it relevant to the bill.

Ms McMILLAN: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I appreciate your guidance. I commend the minister for her courageous leadership while often the victim of being yelled at—disgracefully—as a First Nations woman. I commend her for her leadership during this unprecedented economic context.

The Queensland rental market continues to experience very low vacancy rates. That is not unique to Queensland or to Australia. Annual price growth and yield are reaching record highs in areas of the United States, New Zealand and Europe. The increase in the price of residential property is far outperforming wage growth. As we transition out of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must have modern rental laws that protect renters and support stability in the market.

In November 2019, the Queensland government released *A better renting future reform roadmap*. The government set out a two-stage reform pathway. Stage 1 of the reform focuses on tenants and residents to enforce their existing rights and to ensure all Queensland rental accommodation is safe, secure and functional. During the consultation process for the stage 1 reform and the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, there was widespread support for the establishment of minimum housing standards. The legislative reforms implemented by the bill are supported by the significant \$1.9 billion Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025 and the \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund to boost supply and increase housing and homelessness support across Queensland. The Palaszczuk Labor government is proud of its record and of this important investment.

The Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027 is a 10-year framework driving key reforms and targeted investment across the housing continuum to ensure Queenslanders have access to safe, secure and affordable housing. The Housing Strategy aims to ensure confidence in housing markets and improve protections and certainty for consumers and industry alike by reforming and modernising

the housing legislation framework. The Queensland Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017-2020 detailed a commitment to regulatory reforms to improve consumer protections for all Queenslanders accessing houses in the rental market and to provide greater certainty for industry.

The Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025 reaffirms the Palaszczuk Labor government's commitment to deliver rental law reform, including minimum housing standards, that better protects renters and property owners alike and that improves stability in Queensland's rental market. The Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 delivers key housing strategy objectives, including to review and modernise rental laws, to ensure vulnerable community members are supported to sustain tenancies to facilitate their social, economic and cultural participation—values that are important to a Labor government—and to support a fair and responsive housing system that enhances the safety and dignity of all Queenslanders.

The bill delivers stage 1 rental law reforms to improve safety, security and certainty for the Queensland rental market by ending without-grounds evictions and providing appropriate approved reasons to end a tenancy. This is a much needed and important step towards providing more certainty, transparency and accountability for all parties in the rental sector.

The amendments around the managing and ending of tenancies achieve an appropriate balance between the rights of renters and the rights of lessors, making it easier for renters to have a pet by requiring that property owners can refuse only on prescribed grounds. It is a Labor government that understands the importance of pets and other animals for many individuals and families across Queensland. Just because a Queenslanders is renting does not mean they should be denied the warmth and love that owning a pet provides.

The bill will ensure that renters have confidence that their rental property is safe, secure and functional by prescribing minimum housing standards. This is a basic need and a basic right of tenants and renters. The introduction of these prescribed minimum housing standards will require all Queensland rental accommodation to meet minimum safety, security and functionality standards.

Ensuring renters experiencing domestic and family violence have options to end a tenancy quickly is important and to be able to do so with limited liability for end-of-lease costs or to change the locks in their rental property without the owner's consent. These amendments make permanent the temporary domestic and family violence protections introduced through the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020.

Where views were diverse, particularly the managing and ending of tenancy agreements and keeping of pets at a premise, the bill seeks to strike the appropriate balance between the rights of the tenant and the rights of the lessor. I welcome the comments made by our minister that some of the issues raised during the consultation process for this bill and the submitters' comments on those issues raised during this inquiry will further inform stage 2 of the government's renting reforms, particularly in relation to minor modifications.

On behalf of the committee I thank those individuals and organisations who have made written submissions on the bill and who have provided their evidence at the public hearings. I also thank sincerely our parliamentary services staff and the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy for their guidance and support. I congratulate the minister on this work and I commend this bill to the House.