




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Record of Proceedings, 16 September 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Housing and Homelessness

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (10.41 am): In response to the unprecedented pressure on the housing market, the Palaszczuk government is implementing tailored responses to help more vulnerable Queenslanders into homes sooner. Through the Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025, our government is investing \$2.9 billion, including the establishment of a new \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund, to boost housing supply and increase housing and homelessness supports across Queensland.

The action plan is contributing to Queensland's plan for economic recovery by creating jobs and supporting vulnerable Queenslanders. Important actions in the plan are aimed squarely at strengthening supports for older women in particular. Older women are the fastest growing group to experience homelessness across Australia. Over the course of their lives, many older women have taken time out of the workforce or have worked part-time while raising a family or attending to other caring responsibilities. As a result, they can have insufficient superannuation and savings of their own. Other factors—such as domestic and family violence, the death of a spouse, serious illness or divorce—can be enough to propel older women into homelessness.

We are supporting older women to access and sustain appropriate and safe accommodation through: social housing and headleasing; private rental assistance, including bond loans, rental grants, RentConnect and rent subsidies; as well as home lending. We also have other initiatives, such as Better Together Housing. This initiative helps older women establish shared tenancies in the private rental market to reduce the cost of living. These are older women like 70-year-old Jenny who became homeless due to domestic violence. My department was able to transition Jenny from crisis accommodation into a safe, secure and affordable home in a community housing property managed by Bric Housing. Now living with other women in inner Brisbane, Jenny has, with support, been able to stabilise her circumstances and describes living with the other women as life changing.

We are also committed to assisting older women experiencing or at risk of homelessness by leveraging community infrastructure. This includes neighbourhood and community centres to provide access to support services and spaces for social activities. We are engaging with women with lived experiences of homelessness and housing need so we can continually improve the way we assist older women to access safe, secure and sustainable housing options.

Last week, I also had the privilege of visiting Foodbank Queensland's operation at Morningside in Minister Farmer's electorate. With funding support from my department, this is another organisation doing incredible work to support some of the most vulnerable people in our community as they work as a pantry for charities and community groups, including school breakfast programs, homelessness shelters, food vans and neighbourhood and community centres. Through important work like this and our Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, the Palaszczuk government is supporting vulnerable Queenslanders who are in need of a helping hand.