



Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 24 February 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

APPROPRIATION (2020-2021) BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill

Community Support and Services Committee, Report

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (12.02 pm): I rise to speak on the estimates process. Let's talk about legacies. That is what the minister wants to talk about. What is the legacy that she and her government will leave in the housing space? Let's look at some of the figures that are factual right at this moment. At the moment there are 16,270 people in the category of 'very high needs' on the social housing register—or waiting list or whatever you want to call it. Some 18 months ago, that figure was 8,924. In the last 18 months those in 'very high needs' increased by 82 per cent. That is an absolute disgrace. How did the minister try to explain it away during estimates? 'Oh, it is because of COVID.' The minister failed to recognise that there had been an increase of 52 per cent before COVID even started. It is actually hard to believe that the numbers can increase by that percentage in that short period of time.

At the moment, colleagues, there are 26,397 people on the social housing waiting list. That is what it is. The minister can call it what she wants, but it is a waiting list. People go on that register because they expect to get a house. The numbers have increased 30 per cent in the last 18 months. We have 16,000 people in the 'very high needs' category. Another 10,000 people are categorised as high, moderate or lower. The minister should do the right thing by telling those people, 'Forget it, you will never get a house.' The minister is misleading these people, giving them false hope that one day they are going to get a house, and has blamed it on COVID.

Ms Enoch interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Minister, I will ask you to stop interjecting, please.

Mr MANDER: I can understand why the minister is interjecting, because those figures hurt—and so they should hurt. They tell a story of failure. This government has not kept up with demand in the social housing space. That is why we in this state have an affordability issue. That is why rents are so high. That is why people cannot get into the market at the moment. That is why we have so many people on the social housing waiting list.

One thing I would really love to know—and we will find this out—concerns the number of houses that they claim they are building. I want to know the net increase in houses. Everywhere I go I hear about them selling houses: 'They have sold this house; they have sold this block; they have sold this

house.' The community housing sector is just beyond frustration in terms of working with this government. It is a group that can provide the solutions that we require to provide the houses that we need in this state.

This minister can talk about legacies. Her legacy will be the increase in the number of people in the 'very high needs' category on the social housing waiting list or register. I have whistleblowers from the department emailing me as they are ashamed of what is happening. The minister fails to tell people that older people attending at the housing service centres who can no longer afford to maintain market rent are being turned away because they are not eligible for the social housing register. This is another way that the figures are being fudged. We will hear more about that as well in the future.

This is incredibly worrying for Queenslanders, particularly very vulnerable people given false hope by this minister. We need to see practical solutions, not rhetoric. We need to see cooperation with the community housing sector, who feel as though the government has just pushed them aside and not allowed them to be in the affordable housing space, to ensure that we have housing in all levels at all times of need so that we can house Queenslanders, particularly vulnerable Queenslanders. We want answers to those questions. We will come back and make sure that people have a clearer picture of the true state of social housing in this state.