




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Social Housing

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (2.46 pm): The member for Ipswich is right: there is a housing crisis in this state, and it has nothing to do with the federal government because housing is the responsibility—

Government members interjected.

Mr MANDER: I am going to prove that in a moment. There is a housing crisis in this state, and it is because of the inaction of a government that has been in power for 25 of the last 30 years. These crises do not happen overnight: they happen over a period of time when there has not been an appropriate investment in infrastructure. There are 26,000 households on the social housing waiting list. In the last 18 months to September the very high needs list rose by 82 per cent in this state—82 per cent. That is totally and utterly unacceptable and an indictment on this government.

We now have one of the worst rates of rental stress in the country. I was in Cairns last week; Cairns has the second-highest rental stress rate in the country. People are struggling. Construction is not keeping up with demand. In fact, if social housing construction kept up to date with population growth, we would have 6,000 more social housing properties in this state. They are so desperately needed. Mr Deputy Speaker, let me give you some evidence. Last week, along with a few other shadow ministers I spoke with the Community Housing Industry Association, the peak body for community housing. They told me something which at first I found hard to believe. They said that over the last five years the number of social houses has increased by 0.6 per cent—0.6 per cent. I thought that surely after all the crowing from the Minister for Housing about the construction that is supposedly taking place that cannot be true.

I went back and checked a few questions on notice. In 2015 when the Labor government came into power there were 66,939 houses managed by the government and community housing sector. At the end of 2020 that number increased to 68,719, so that is an increase of 1,780. That is what they crow about all the time. What is the missing figure? The missing figure is how many have been sold in that period of time. Over the last five years the number of blocks of land and properties that have been sold is 2,000. That is actually more than have been built, so that 0.6 per cent is correct. That is a disgrace and this government has been found out.

They speak up a big game with regards to what they are doing in social housing, but they betray the people they claim they represent. They betray them. They are not putting roofs over the heads of the people who are vulnerable. In fact the other figure we are looking forward to seeing is how many people are applying for social housing now but are being ruled ineligible. They do not even get on the list; they are ruled ineligible. I am getting many anecdotal stories of people, particularly older people, who cannot even get on what they now call the register of need.

However, it gets worse. That is the situation now but this government are going to make it worse with the policies they are planning to introduce. They are planning to introduce minimum accessible housing standards that the Minister for Public Works has championed at the national level. This means that every house will have to be built to a particular standard for the disabled. On the face of things, that sounds great but the cost of construction for every house will increase by at least \$6,000, when we are trying to make housing more affordable. Then we have the best practice principle, which is basically the reward for unions to make sure they increase the construction cost by 30 per cent, and that is what the consumer has to wear.

I now get to the final one—and I am really looking forward to seeing if they are game enough to bring this forward—and it is the rental reforms which are going to be a further disincentive for people to invest in houses to rent. They will be told that they must have a pet in their property, even if they do not want it, and that the tenant can do minor alterations and minor renovations to the property without seeking permission. They will also be told that leases will basically mean nothing, that they cannot move somebody on at the end of the lease. That is Bill Shorten's negative gearing campaign all over again. I do not think they are game enough to come before the people of Queensland and make our housing crisis even worse because of their ridiculous left-wing policies.