




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Federal Election

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.03 pm): In about 9½ days time the last ballot will be cast and people will decide who is going to form the next government of Australia.

Mr Harper: Hopefully, Labor!

Ms HOWARD: It is interesting that you say that, member for Thuringowa, because I am hoping for the same. We simply cannot have another three years of a coalition government. It is time for a change. The coalition lacks the vision and bold policy ideas that will help this country manage urgent and emerging challenges in the future. We need to have courage from our leaders and we need some bold ideas.

For example, there is a growing number of people in Ipswich who are at risk of homelessness because of the current rental crisis. The vacancy rent for rental properties in Ipswich has fallen to a record low of 0.5 per cent. Only 80 rental properties were available to rent in Ipswich during the month of March. People call my office in distress because they cannot find somewhere to rent and they are facing homelessness. These are people with young families, people who need to leave abusive partners, elderly people, and people with disabilities. The Morrison government does not care. They have announced no new policies this election that would help renters or boost affordable housing. The Morrison government is still going ahead and scrapping the National Rental Affordability Scheme. When it comes to building more social and affordable housing, Scott Morrison does not see it as his responsibility. It is not his job; he is not holding the hose.

Fortunately, the Palaszczuk government is getting the job done by investing in building thousands of homes across the state and—as we heard from the Treasurer this morning—committing \$2.9 billion to support current and future social housing. Unlike Scott Morrison, we take this responsibility seriously. Another responsibility we take seriously is health care. At this election we need a federal government that will step up and fund its fair share of public hospital spending. In my electorate the Ipswich Hospital is doing a superb job despite the pressures placed on it by our rapidly growing population. We want to make sure they continue serving Ipswich's healthcare needs well into the future. That is why over the past five years the Palaszczuk government has committed \$166.9 million for the Ipswich Hospital expansion. This investment has funded a newly completed 26-bed ward, a new 64-bed acute mental health unit now under construction, and a planned expansion of our hospital's emergency department. On top of that, we are delivering \$40 million to build a new satellite hospital in Ripley.

More needs to be done. State and territory health ministers, including our own health minister, have called on Scott Morrison to increase the federal government's contribution to hospital spending from 45 to 50 per cent, but Morrison has refused. It is not his responsibility; it is not his job. The coalition's underinvestment in public hospitals, primary health care and Medicare is putting lives at risk. It is time for a change. Another three years will mean a further regression in health and housing policy, making more constituents poorer and more vulnerable.