




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Cooper Electorate, Housing Development Application; Marist College

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.03 pm): I rise to update the House on a housing development application made in my electorate and to correct the public record about misinformation that has been circulated concerning the residents of four single-storey dwellings which have been purchased in order for this development to go ahead. If approved, this project will result in housing for almost 300 people in an area where people are urgently seeking accommodation.

This particular development has received media attention—focusing on the residents of the four properties who, according to media reports, are being evicted into homelessness. While the Brisbane City Council is the decision-maker in relation to development applications, I will always advocate that any proposed development meets our community's needs and expectations and that the rights of the people affected are upheld at all times.

I immediately visited these homes to meet with the residents and was relieved to learn that their situation had been misrepresented. What I discovered was that three of the four homes were in fact vacant, with residents having already found alternative housing. There was one remaining—Bernie—who was yet to have housing organised. When I met with him on 24 April, I was surprised to find out that his primary advocate was Woolloongabba ward Councillor Jonathon Sri, who Bernie has been talking to since about 1 April.

I immediately started working to try to find a housing solution, but it was only two days later that I finally received an email from Councillor Sri outlining Bernie's situation and requesting urgent assistance. The email, which I tabled, did not explain why he had taken 25 days to pass urgent information on to me or why Councillor Sri had found time to organise protests and media coverage but not to seek support to ensure Bernie had not become homeless.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 26 April 2022, from Councillor for the Gabba Ward, Brisbane City Council, Cr Jonathan Sri, to the member for Cooper, Ms Jonty Bush MP, regarding housing stability [728](#).

By the time this email arrived, the department of housing was already organising for Bernie to take the keys of a private apartment in his area—an amazing outcome, particularly when we have a housing shortage. Unfortunately, Bernie has rejected that offer on, what he tells me, the advice of Councillor Sri that they will be able to stop the development—an assurance I would say comes with a very high degree of uncertainty.

I would have loved the opportunity to work with Councillor Sri on finding a solution for Bernie. I have no idea what Councillor Sri's objective is here in advising a vulnerable, ageing, disabled single man to not accept a public housing offer. Protests and demonstrations are certainly an important part of a free society, but we have a duty to help those in our community who are in need. There is a risk that as politically passionate people with big goals we can sometimes lose sight of the basic duties. I would urge Councillor Sri not to fall into that trap.

While I am on my feet, I would like to give a shout-out and acknowledge the students from Marist College, in my electorate, and their teacher, Tara, for coming along to parliament today. It is great that they can be here.