




Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Housing

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (2.03 pm): There is no single definition of homelessness, but what is clear is that people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness are among Australia's most socially and economically disadvantaged. Research has shown that homelessness can be the result of many social, economic and health related factors. Homelessness in Australia was artificially hidden by COVID-19 measures, and data shows that it had even fallen slightly in April-June 2020. Many of those who were sleeping rough before the pandemic have returned to the streets, with only a minority transitioning from homelessness into housing.

Across Australia we are facing unprecedented rental stress, and here in Queensland there has been around a 30 per cent drop in the number of available properties, which have been taken out of the rental pool over the past two years. The costs associated with investments, including mortgage costs along with inadequate housing supply, have dramatically increased the rents being charged and many people on low incomes are being priced out of rental properties. The reality is that individuals and families are being left with nowhere to turn once they are pushed out of the mainstream housing market.

The member for Everton spoke on the Labor Party's processes last sitting week, and I want to take a moment to correct his misunderstandings. Unlike the LNP, the Labor Party is a broad church; we converse with and listen to branch members. Our strength is the grassroots connection we have to community. This was nothing to do with a lack of trust in our Premier and the amazing work she and her cabinet team have been doing; this was listening to people who have been speaking with communities about what needs to be done to fix this confronting situation. I can say this because I attended the action plan meeting. I was there, so I would say that I have a better understanding of what happened at that meeting than the member for Everton, who I did not see there.

Need I remind the member for Everton that under his stewardship as the minister for housing he announced a number of sweeping reforms he described as the 'biggest shake-up in decades', which has directly led us to the dire situation we now face. We should never forget the LNP's abolition and defunding of the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service Queensland. This organisation managed critical homelessness prevention services across Queensland and had approximately 80,000 clients—80,000 clients who were abandoned by the LNP. Under the disastrous LNP government public housing implementation plan, tenants faced insecurity of tenure and they planned to outsource the management of the government's stock. History has shown that those properties being outsourced resulted in dire outcomes.