




Speech By
Sandy Bolton

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Housing

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (2.44 pm): Mr Speaker, as you and others are aware, I and others have raised the issue of affordable housing in this chamber for years before it was a headline. I had no crystal ball, only the reality of what was happening in my own community pre-COVID. The announcement of a Queensland housing summit is welcomed, as the member for Redlands mentioned. However, we need to ask a question to ensure the wellbeing of all we represent, especially with the 2032 Olympics coming up.

After the letters, pleas and speeches in this chamber by myself and other MPs, why has it taken this long? Was nobody listening? To hear that the granny flat idea was first touted at a recent round table, given it has been raised for years, left many scratching their heads. Recommendations from the upcoming summit must translate to action, including how to prevent it ever happening again, as our housing crisis was preventable. The early indicators were all there. These need to include an independent analysis of all levels of government and how we can work together to address the factors that got us to this point and ensure all focus on immediate, if temporary, solutions whilst working on the permanent. This needs to incorporate economic factors, investment trends, building codes and all contributors that have been raised over multiple years, as well the current labour and material shortages.

With the volume of expertise paid for by taxpayer dollars to identify risks in every realm, how was it that safe and affordable housing was left off the list? This summit is the opportunity to effect real and immediate change. We need to be bold and own up to our collective and individual roles. There is no room for blame or shelving of responsibility. There is much we can do immediately, for example, an identification of any and all unused, unallocated and underutilised government land as has been requested that could be used for short and medium-term accommodation for our workers and to get Queenslanders out of tents and cars. I have spoken previously of one such site that I pleaded for three years ago that still sits in idleness, waiting for master planning. As well, there should be exemptions for a trial period on all transfer duties for pensioners who wish to downsize their properties to free up family-sized homes. A must is ensuring that NRAS remains or there is an equivalent replacement. We also need innovation, collaboration and proper identification of contributors, including on the impacts of short-term accommodation, as the member for South Brisbane brought up. Facts, not assumptions, are essential.

I have said many times that having a secure, safe place to lay our head at night is the responsibility of every level of government. It has been a relief in these last weeks to finally hear this echoed instead of the blame game previously utilised. Once we get this crisis sorted, may we not ever see this again and be proactive versus reactive, with the summit the catalyst for change.

