




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Sustainability

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (2.49 pm): Sustainability must be more than a buzzword. It must be the practical application of efforts for Queenslanders to sustain, which in the dictionary means to strengthen or support physically and mentally. This is multidimensional and includes affordability, for what use is a sustainable product or endeavour if residents cannot afford to use it or governments to implement it?

For two years we have been advocating for passive wastewater systems which are economical and have been proven successful across Australia and internationally. However, the proposed new Australian Standard for onsite sewage treatment plants being made mandatory under Queensland's Plumbing and Drainage Act will implement a minimum eight-person capacity for an onsite domestic wastewater treatment system. This is in an era where households are growing smaller, with an Australian average now of 2.6 persons and the need for secondary dwellings—including granny flats and tiny homes—is growing to address our housing crisis. This will mean that households needing to install these treatment systems will have to be larger and more expensive in construction, maintenance and power when that is not needed for a one-bedroom household.

Affordability is part of sustainability and in this case we are making sustainability unaffordable. Then there are the environmental upgrade agreements, or EUAs. We have been seeking these for both commercial and residential buildings since 2019 as they are an affordable way to install solar panels and create less emissions. To simplify, a building owner borrows money from a financier—and that can include local governments—and makes the repayments through the council rates system. It is voluntary, with long payback times which can be passed along when the building is sold rather than finance having to be wound up. It sounds sensible if we want to transition faster to renewables, doesn't it? The state government have announced in the Energy and Jobs Plan that they will be implemented however only for commercial premises, unlike in Victoria which have brought it in for residential.

In our electorate by far the larger number of buildings are residential. Yes, EUAs will make a difference to our businesses and our emissions. However, with half of our homes being without solar panels, why would these be left out? It sometimes seems like we take two steps forward and at other times one step back. We need to be pushing forward together on sustainability which includes being real on what Queenslanders can afford. Overreach is not the answer with wastewater standards, nor is under-reach with EUAs, as just two examples.