




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 28 March 2023

HOUSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.01 pm): I, too, rise to address the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. As identified in the committee's report, indeed in the chair's own foreword, Queensland is currently experiencing high demand for housing. That is an understatement. Every member of this House would have constituents contacting them on an almost daily basis because of the lack of housing availability and affordability across the length and breadth of the state of Queensland. We are told that this bill is part of implementing the Queensland government's Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027, a 10-year framework that we are six years into. We are still waiting to see many results, to be blunt.

This bill looks at two aspects. The first is changes to the housing sector to enable people to voluntarily donate to a charity that would in turn make investment in affordable houses—that is, Homes for Homes, a not-for-profit established by the Big Issue. Those of us who spend some time in the city often see the *Big Issue* being sold. We commend the work of the Big Issue and certainly commend their efforts in trying to address affordable housing in the state of Queensland.

The other aspect is around retirement villages. It is designed to strengthen public confidence and enhance financial transparency in the retirement village industry. Anyone in this House who has any dealings with the retirement village industry knows that that sort of move would be welcome to ensure residents of those retirement villages can see what they are getting into and what is changing during their time within a retirement village.

I return to the contribution by the member for Capalaba in terms of what this government is actually delivering when it comes to improving availability and affordability of housing in this state. We hear a lot of words—about a lot of investment and a lot of dollars—but what are we hearing when it comes to putting roofs over the heads of vulnerable Queenslanders? Indeed, it is not just for vulnerable Queenslanders but Queenslanders in general who are desperate to get housing for them and their family.

This morning the opposition asked a number of questions. It started with the Leader of the Opposition asking—given it is nearly two years since the announcement of the Housing Investment Fund, one of those landmark decisions the member for Capalaba referred to—how many Queenslanders have had a roof put over their head through the Queensland Housing Investment Fund? The answer was zero—none. The Leader of the Opposition went on to ask about the statement that Griffith University would be ready within six months to offer crisis accommodation. Six months on, how many people are being accommodated at the Griffith University? Again, the answer is zero.

We then had a question from the member for Everton, the shadow minister for housing—someone whose performance those opposite should be aspiring to in terms of his tenure as housing minister. He was one of the finest, and he went a long way to addressing the waitlist for social housing. His plans would have done even more had they not been torn up by the Palaszczuk Labor government on its election in 2015. The member for Everton asked a question around the Deputy Premier's

statements concerning granny flats and making more, cheaper properties available for those needing to enter the rental market, helping thousands of people across the state. How many has it helped? None. We have not heard of any. The Premier certainly could not answer that question, either.

We then heard from the member for Surfers Paradise, the shadow minister for seniors, asking about the purchase of that retirement village in Clayfield. We understand that subsequently villages have been purchased in Toowoomba and just today out in Redlands. How many people have been accommodated through those retirement villages? Again the answer is zero.

Then there was the announcement just yesterday of this rental price cap. First of all, it is not a rental price cap. If we understand what has been put in the media by the Premier, all it does is allow private owners of rented properties to pass on an increase only once per year. The member for Currumbin asked how often in the current environment we see rental agreements increase rent more than once a year. The answer would be that, out of the million people renting, a very small fraction of those who are not on one-year agreements but on six-month agreements would potentially have more than one price increase a year. Again, how will this solve the housing affordability and housing availability crisis that is gripping my electorate of Glass House and the state of Queensland? We hear a lot of words from those opposite. Whilst I do not disagree with the proposals being put forward in this legislation, I fear that yet again all we will hear are words and we will see no real action.

How many Queenslanders are moving into social or affordable housing or having more available housing presented to them as a result of the actions of those opposite? The Deputy Premier announced that there would be a review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. I asked the Deputy Premier when my constituents in Glass House will have an opportunity to have input into that review. The answer I got was some vague reference to the fact that they have a statutory obligation to put it out for 30 days consultation once the draft is developed and that the draft would not be developed until later this year. Again, that is not going to free up land that can potentially be developed. It will be years before the likes of my son and my daughter can potentially purchase an affordable house anywhere within the Sunshine Coast-Moreton Bay region, or even for that matter the Gympie Regional Council area, outside of South-East Queensland itself.

All of these ideas might make good sound bites but, when the rubber hits the road, they are not producing the results. They are not helping vulnerable Queenslanders who are coming to us as their local members pleading for social housing and pleading for housing availability in our local area so that they do not have to relocate their children from their schools or move away from the job they have secured. It goes further than that. A lot of the business owners in the electorate of Glass House are pleading with me to open up more housing in the area. They cannot get employees. The local IGA used to have 90 per cent of its workforce located within the Maleny postcode area. That is now 10 per cent. Why? It is because the employees of the IGA have been priced out of the market. The same goes for many of the hospitality businesses in places such as Maleny, Montville and even Woodford and Wamuran. They cannot get staff because people cannot find accommodation within cooee of where they need to work. We need to sort this out.

Again, there is nothing wrong with what is being proposed. My concern is that it is just platitudes and words and it is not going to solve the crisis in the affordability and availability of housing in this state. Queenslanders deserve better. They do not need to be told that they are just whingeing when they bring these concerns to us as members of parliament. They are genuinely trying to find solutions for themselves, their children, their friends and their neighbours. The people of this state deserve better than what they are getting from this Palaszczuk Labor government.