




Speech By  
**Hon. Di Farmer**

**MEMBER FOR BULIMBA**

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**HOUSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (4.06 pm): Will you get a lend of those people? Will you get a lend of the way they are carrying on? Here we are in one of the most distressing crises we have seen in Australia. Every single day we are hearing stories of homelessness, of absolute crisis and need. If you are not a person who is experiencing difficulty in getting a roof over your head then you, as a good human being—as we all are—are distressed that it has come to this. This crew over here, when they were in government, wrote letters to little old ladies in social housing saying, ‘If you go on a holiday to visit your daughter, we’re going to take your house off you’. They wrote letters to vulnerable people to say that—they might have been living in the house for years and raised their family there—they had to take strangers into their house.

At the end of their three years in government, not only had they cut 90 per cent of construction of social housing; we were almost 450 houses behind on the social housing register. The absolute cheek of them! Has any single one of them picked up the phone to Peter Dutton in the last month and said, ‘Mate, how about you support the \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund so that 30,000 people can get homes?’ I bet not one single one of them has picked up the phone and said, ‘This is terrible.’ We see all of this carrying on and fake concern. I say to them: you do something about it. They had zero commencements in Logan, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Ipswich. They cut funding to the tenancy advisory and advocacy service. They put up the rent of low-income social housing tenants, for goodness sake.

The Housing Legislation Amendment Bill is one of many things that this government is doing to address this issue, yet there is no one single fix to this issue. This bill is one of many things. Let me list some of the things that we have done in this government. We have doubled the Housing Investment Fund by \$1 billion to \$2 billion. We have delivered up to 1,200 new social and affordable homes from the Housing Investment Fund. We have exceeded our first-year target by commencing 832 social homes. We have delivered changes to enable better use of secondary dwellings. We have delivered specialist homelessness services through a \$166.3 million investment. Many may think that this bill is modest, but it makes a difference. Everything makes a difference.

We are going to look at the Homes for Homes donation, which was established by the *Big Issue* magazine. I want to really praise the *Big Issue* and the people who support that and have made it part of their lives. Those people are an important part of my local community. Clearly in Queensland we do not have the system in place which allows that donation to happen easily, but I am grateful that this is yet another way that we can contribute to the development of social housing. The Queensland government has made a contribution towards that to start that off. It is fantastic because in my community people just want to help. As I said, if you are not a person who is experiencing rental stress or homelessness or any challenge in terms of having a roof over your head, you just want to help and this is a really practical way to do it. I personally am going to be encouraging people in my local area to do it.

We will be addressing the issue of retirement villages so there is increased transparency, accountability and consistency. That is an incredibly stressful time for people to choose where they are going to live in their later years and knowing that there is proper scrutiny and transparency in that phase of their lives is absolutely critical. I really want to praise Azure Blue in Cannon Hill, Arcare Aged Care in Seven Hills and Regis Bulimba for the wonderful service that they provide. There is so much to say. The round table is going to deliver more results today. I want to thank the Community Support and Services Committee for its great work on this bill.