




Speech By
Hon. Di Farmer

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2023

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION
(EXPENDITURE CAPS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (4.27 pm): I rise to speak on this bill in respect of the amendments relating to limiting rent increase frequency. I do so not because I do not consider the other aspects of the bill very important, but I know for my community this is an absolutely critical issue. When the Premier announced recently that this was a policy she would be bringing to the House, I know I received an enormous reaction from people in my community.

Many people might think that the electorate of Bulimba is a very affluent electorate. There are certainly a number of affluent streets and suburbs in my community. However, equally, there is a number of people who are really doing it tough. I want to acknowledge that the issues of both accessibility to rental accommodation and affordability of rental accommodation are absolutely critical. They are certainly the overarching issues for the people who are at the crisis end of the housing issue—families who do not have a roof over their family's heads, people who are homeless for extended periods of time. That is an issue that affects all of us and certainly the people of my community. They are closely monitoring the initiatives that this government is putting in place to address it.

I want to acknowledge my Bulimba Electorate Youth Advisory Panel. I think many of us in this House—in fact, you and I, Madam Deputy Speaker—have talked about the real despair that many young people feel about rental affordability and the possibility for them to have their own home. When I was doing the interviews for my Bulimba Electorate Youth Advisory Panel and I asked each one of those applicants what was the most important issue for them and for their peer group, the ability to live in, whether renting or buying, their own home and whether they would ever be able to do that was a huge thing.

On top of the many practical initiatives and the significant billions of dollars worth of funding which this government has allocated to the housing issue—the Housing Summit and the housing round tables that have occurred—there are many other initiatives. We know that there is not one single thing that will fix this issue, but we have doubled the Housing Investment Fund by \$1 billion, to \$2 billion. We have 1,200 new social and affordable homes from the Housing Investment Fund. We are supporting private renters with the immediate housing response for families funding of \$26 million. We have delivered changes to enable the better use of secondary dwellings like granny flats and we are delivering further support for specialist homelessness services. I acknowledge the Brisbane Youth Service, which has just acquired the use of a property in my community. It was great to talk to Pam Barker from the Brisbane Youth Service the other day about how my community can support young people in that facility. She spoke of making sure the workers in her agency are shielded against the despair they are often seeing.

This amendment today, which limits rent increases to once a year, is just one of the many initiatives we are putting in place to respond to community concerns about the impact of current market conditions and cost-of-living pressures on renting households in Queensland. I know that a number of

people have said, 'This is great, but why can't we limit the amount rents are put up by?' The economic advice is that that could be counterproductive and it may mean there are fewer dwellings in the market. There is a range of other reasons.

We are now progressing the stage 2 rental law reforms. I pay tribute to the housing minister for the significant reforms she has made in this space. I look forward to hearing from my community about issues like installing modifications and making minor personalisation changes—all of those things that contribute to a place being a home. I commend the bill to the House.