




Speech By
Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2023

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

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (5.06 pm): Unfortunately, as there is a guillotine looming on this bill other members and I will not have the chance to speak as fully as we would like. I want to comment on a few aspects of the legislation before us. This morning the Deputy Premier tabled an amendment to be inserted into the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill that will amend a totally different piece of legislation. The legislation that he seeks to amend relates to residential tenancy laws and the introduction of a rental cap so that a landlord cannot increase the rent on their property under a 12-month period. We are yet to see any information from the government as to how many people are in rental properties with less than 12 months tenancy where this legislation will apply.

We are yet to see information from the government about how much private rental stock has been taken out of the housing market. That is a significant question because we know that there is a lack of supply and that that is the primary reason that rents have been going up by so much. All members of parliament know that there is a housing crisis. The housing crisis has been looming for some time and has now hit the fan because of a lack of supply. I cannot find the promised land supply monitoring report that the government was supposed to release last year. The last one I can find is the 2021 land supply monitoring report, but there is supposed to be one for last year. We do not have a clear picture from the government on the quantum of the lack of supply of land let alone the lack of supply of housing. Those who are paying the price for that lack of supply are the homeless who are living in tents, living in their cars and desperately rocking up to the limited rental stock that is available only to find that there are 30 or 40 other people competing for the same rental stock.

This amendment before the House does not address the fundamental issue that is causing the hardship, which is lack of supply. It also does not address the fact that there are people pulling their rental stock out of the market and selling it because they are scared about what this government will do in terms of fiddling in their rights as a private landlord. I have rental property listed on the pecuniary interests register, but this legislation does not effect what needs to be effected, which is the opening up of supply. The best way to put downward pressure on rents is to have more housing supply. On the Sunshine Coast alone there are about 7,500 to 8,000 more people a year than before COVID, yet only about 2,000 to 2,500 new homes are released per year. There is a significant difference between the population increase and the release of new housing, yet the government is behind on its own reporting mechanisms in terms of new land supply.

Until we start to see fair dinkum, transparent information about the release of new housing supply and about the barriers to private investment—people are getting out, we hear in record numbers, of private investment—this is all tinkering at the edges and failing to deal with the fundamental issues. It is failing to deal with the hardship caused by a crisis in housing that has been looming for the past seven to eight years and now is—

Ms Grace: Oh, rubbish.

Ms SIMPSON: It is a crisis in housing, Minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Members, we will not have any cross-chamber arguments, please.

Ms SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is a crisis in housing, and it is a crisis because of a lack of supply. The fact that this government is so out of touch, so chaotic and embroiled in multiple crises—whether it is the crime crisis, an issue of integrity crisis or the housing crisis—means that it is out of touch with what is happening to everyday Queenslanders. We see desperation on the part of people who never envisaged they would be homeless or forced into a situation where 30 or 40 people are competing for the one rental property. This legislation does not fix that. If we want to fix the rental and housing crisis, we need to start to be fair dinkum about releasing new, timely supply and looking at the barriers that are scaring people out of the private market.

Only a few days ago there was a story about Airbnb. We do not know the full extent of people moving into the Airbnb sector. It causes a lot of disruption in communities when residents find party houses next to them and there is a lack of mechanisms to deal with some of the inappropriate uses of those properties. However, there was an interesting comment from the owner of a property now being rented on Airbnb. That person said that the reason she had taken her house out of the residential rental market and put it on to Airbnb was that she was scared about this government and what it was doing.

I believe we need fair laws. We also need to listen to those who are mainly providing the rental stock. Build to rent is nice but, once again, it is tinkering around the edges of the systemic problems that have seen record numbers of people getting out of that market. About 70 per cent of homes are owner occupied and about 30 per cent are rental stock. It varies a little bit in some regions. On the Sunshine Coast about 72 per cent are owner occupied, many with big mortgages, with the balance being rental stock. As more people have sold those homes, fewer of those properties, not only on the Sunshine Coast but throughout Queensland, have come back into the rental market. We need to remove the barriers to private investment so that more people have a home.