



Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2023

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

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.38 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022. This bill continues the government's reform agenda for the local government sector and delivers on our 2020 election commitment to the people of Queensland to implement electoral expenditure caps for local elections.

The government's reforms have been guided by principles of integrity, transparency, diversity and consistency. This bill establishes an electoral expenditure cap scheme for local government elections which will apply at the next local government quadrennial elections, due in March 2024. The cap scheme will apply to all electoral participants including candidates for councillor and mayor, groups of candidates, political parties and third parties participating in an election.

Other than the actual amount of the caps, the proposed scheme for local government is consistent with the key features of the state scheme, including third-party registration, a seven-month capped electoral expenditure period, indexation of caps, penalty and recovery provisions compliance; and record keeping. However, unlike the state scheme, the proposed caps for mayors and councillors are grouped into tiers which recognise the different sizes of local governments and local government areas across Queensland. I support the bill and I note that the committee made four recommendations, including that the bill be passed.

Turning now to the rental reform amendments also included in the bill, all Queenslanders should have access to safe, secure and affordable housing. We know that availability of affordable housing is a major issue in the community and indeed across the country. It is certainly one issue my constituents are talking to me and to my office about. During a recent mobile office blitz across all of the suburbs of my electorate, it was an issue raised with me by at least half of those who came to talk to me, predominantly about interest rates and mortgage stress. We know that that is something that is being felt keenly by people across Queensland and across the country.

While I appreciate that those macro policy issues around interest rates are not in the purview of state governments, it is certainly something that is having an impact and our government is listening and acting in the areas where we can. Our government's action to limit the frequency of rent increases to once a year for all residential tenancy agreements and rooming accommodation agreements is about stabilising rents in the private rental market. A limit on the frequency of rent increases is the next step in our rental law reforms, which have already sought to make it fairer for renters through measures including stronger eviction safeguards, establishing minimum housing standards for rental properties and making it easier to have pets, which we know through a growing body of evidence has a significant positive impact on mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

Another way the Palaszczuk government is working to address housing affordability issues is through the delivery of more social housing dwellings. In my electorate of Nudgee there are a significant number of social housing dwellings and we have seen a continued significant investment in dwellings since being elected in 2015, having delivered 82 new social housing dwellings. This investment has included 21 new apartments in Nundah and 37 apartments in Zillmere. These are ideally located in areas with accessible, affordable public transport services nearby and appropriate shopping precincts. A further 17 new units are currently under construction across two projects in Zillmere.

I know from talking to social housing tenants in both those areas of Nundah and Zillmere and indeed across all suburbs which have investment from our government just what having access to housing means to them—not only housing but the updated designs and innovations in how we design these units are making a real difference to those living in them. They are not only safe places to live but they are really beautifully designed. I think that is absolutely about the dignity of housing and the people who live in these properties who take great care of them, because they do appreciate what it has brought to the safety and provision of their families and children.

I want to acknowledge the significant investment, time and effort of our housing minister. I talk to her often about the issue of safe housing and appropriate housing for young Queenslanders and vulnerable Queenslanders. She is always willing to talk about the new ways that we can provide appropriate housing of varying mixes in terms of both apartments and appropriate housing but also single-bed units and homes for the significant increase we have seen in single women who are living alone. Many of them are aged and want to live in complexes with other women of a similar age. I have seen more and more of those innovations in my community. They have been incredibly well received. I commend the bill to the House.