




Speech By
Robert Skelton

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

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HOUSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (12.47 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Palaszczuk government's Housing Legislation Amendment Bill. Obviously it delivers two important reforms. I want to reflect on the previous nauseating contribution that wasted a lot of time in the chamber talking about other issues. The Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027, the Palaszczuk government's 10-year framework, aims to ensure access to safe, secure and affordable housing for Queenslanders. The strategy also seeks to ensure confidence in housing markets, consumer protection and modernisation of the housing legislative framework. The Housing Legislation Amendment Bill helps achieve these objectives by enabling the Homes for Homes donation deed model, which aims to boost the supply of social and affordable housing and increase private sector investment in the Queensland economy. Moreover, the bill aims to maintain public confidence in the retirement village industry by increasing consumer protections and reforming the legislative framework for improved transparency, accountability and consistency of financial reporting in retirement villages.

I will talk a little bit about the Homes for Homes program and the organisation responsible, the Big Issue, as the program makes up a major part of these amendments. The *Big Issue* is a street newspaper which has been operating in Australia since June 1996. Since then the *Big Issue* has sold over 13 million copies, earning nearly \$31 million for the enterprise. This has allowed them to employ over 7,000 street vendors over nearly three decades. These vendors are always people who are homeless or come from marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds. It goes without saying that the *Big Issue* has been life-changing for many disadvantaged Australians, especially our homeless.

Homes for Homes was launched by the Big Issue in 2015. The initiative is simple—it encourages home owners to make donations of 0.1 per cent of their property's price at the time of sale. These donations are tax deductible. Unlike the erroneous claims that were just made by the member for South Brisbane, this does not operate in the state of Queensland—hence this amendment.

Homes for Homes distributes this money to social housing providers to build housing in areas most affected by the current housing shortage. The Homes for Homes initiative operates in other jurisdictions using a permissive caveat on the land title to remind selling property owners to make the voluntary donation under the donation deed and perpetuate the participation of the property in the initiative. However, Queensland's land titling law does not support the use of caveats in the same way. That is why we are amending the bill—just for the advice of the Greens party.

The administrative advice serves as a reminder to the landowner at the time the land is sold that a Homes for Homes donation deed exists and that the owner has agreed to donate a portion of the sale price to Homes for Homes. However, it does not bind successors in title. Overall, the bill seeks to support the initiative in Queensland as part of our Housing Strategy to ensure safe, secure and affordable housing for Queenslanders.

The Retirement Villages Act has been spoken about. It provides the regulatory framework for retirement village schemes in Queensland. The act places obligations on scheme operators. It also

requires them to provide residents with regular financial statements, audited annual financial statements and audit reports. The act gives residents the right to access this information and participate in decision-making regarding financial statements and budgets.

However, transparency has been an issue for the industry, and this has been brought to the attention of the department. In late 2019 amendments were made to the housing legislation to improve transparency, accountability and consistency. The department contracted an independent firm, and hence we are making these changes. These reforms aim to provide more transparent and consistent financial statements and budgets to village residents and the department.

I want to thank the committee for their research into the bill. I am a part of that committee. I will add that I am a renter so I am actually in the room when these decisions are being made. I would like to thank our housing minister and her partnerships. I have some social housing in Nambour and I will be able to deliver some community housing in Yandina in June. They will be doing another contract with Coast2Bay thanks to the department. We also have Eco Cottages participating in the prefab homes. These are all just little things that tie into the big issue of housing affordability and homelessness. It is just another step in meeting our commitment under the Palaszczuk government's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. I commend this bill to the House.