




Speech By
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HOUSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.14 pm): I rise to make a small contribution to the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill. I would like to thank the committee for their work. As has been pointed out by other speakers on this side of the chamber, the LNP will not be opposing the bill. I would like to take this opportunity to go through a few points.

The bill amends the Housing Act 2003, the Housing Regulation 2015 and the Retirement Villages Act 1999. The bill deals with two issues: first, the establishment of the Homes for Homes donation deed model in Queensland; and, second, changes to the Retirement Villages Act 1999 to strengthen financial reporting requirements. I will first of all address the Homes for Homes scheme.

By the government's own admission, this legislation is in response to the Housing Summit which the government held on 20 October last year. The sector came with an open-minded approach and new ideas and there, from all reports, appeared to be a real willingness to get on with solving the housing crisis in Queensland and the problems associated with the housing crisis.

The reality is that time waits for no-one. I will come back to this point shortly. Time having moved on, the goodwill that would have no doubt been in that room in late October last year seems to be evaporating rather quickly. At the end of the day, as I said, you cannot buy time. This was many months ago. Notwithstanding the Christmas and new year break, here we are now getting towards the back end of March and with the path we are heading down it is very slow to see tangible action.

I have said already that the opposition will not stand in the way of the changes that allow for the Homes for Homes model to operate in Queensland. It has been said—and I completely concur—that it is an organisation trying to do its bit to put a roof over people's heads. It is an independent, not-for-profit company that raises much needed funds to provide social and affordable housing through people making a tax deductible 0.1 per cent donation from the sale of their property. In its purist form, this is a very noble approach.

Established by the social enterprise the Big Issue, Homes for Homes is operational in all Australian states and territories. I believe the previous speaker on this side of the chamber, the member for Glass House, pointed out that when he is in the big smoke of Brisbane he buys himself a copy of the *Big Issue*. I take this opportunity, given it is topical in relation to this particular section of my contribution, to acknowledge all of those fine men and women who get off their behinds and do something about their own lot in life and sell the *Big Issue*. I highly recommend it. It is a great read.

The Community Support and Services Committee's report identified that the organisation has granted over \$1.28 million in funding to 13 projects in Victoria, Queensland, the Northern Territory and the ACT. This obviously gives people the option to voluntarily make this donation and the LNP happily supports this endeavour. However, if we are to be honest and mature about the scale of donations that we could possibly expect government coffers to receive and subsequent investment, we are likely to see fairly minimal financial returns. We wish it were more, but given that we have cost-of-living

pressures impacting pretty much every Queenslander it may well be dawning for a bit of a false hope to think that the coffers will be overflowing with any proceeds from the scheme, no matter how good the intent is.

At the end of the day, skyrocketing interest rates are having a flow-on effect on the housing market. As someone who does not ever claim to be an expert in any one thing, but having studied, in the big building next door at QUT, a masters degree in property economics, some of the items that have been raised, which I will not elaborate on for too long—I will keep to the strict long title of the bill—worry me greatly as to what the unintended consequences could be for public housing in this state and the private housing investment market. I hope I am proven wrong, but we will see what the result will be of any proposed changes in the coming months. I stress that there may well be unintended consequences.

We know that the Homes for Homes model will be a drop in the ocean of what is needed given the sheer enormity of the housing crisis which, sadly, Queensland finds itself in the grips of. The Community Support and Services Committee made three recommendations in relation to the Homes for Homes provisions of the bill which suggest some minor technical changes and clarifications along with ensuring the clear communication of any donation being voluntary. They are valid recommendations which the LNP wholeheartedly endorses.

I would now like to highlight the Housing Summit background and promises. I have said already—and we all know in this House—that there is definitely a housing crisis, and again I go back to my opening comments: you cannot buy time. You cannot rewind the hands on the clock. The state government has been in power now for eight years. When we come to the next state election they will have been in power for a decade. At the end of the day, it is almost tailoresque that what gets measured, gets done. Despite our best efforts during question time to get the minister to have a crack at answering different questions, the sad reality is that there has been very, very little stock—in fact, not enough—to keep up with the pressing housing crisis in this state. We have made it very clear that the first thing the state government owes people is to at least feel safe but also where practicable put a house over people's heads. That is absolutely the second thing they have to look at doing.

The reality is that we are seeing a range of different housing announcements. The LNP does fear that those opposite are overhyping the legislation and that it is something which provides assistance on a very limited scale. We need to start seeing some tangible results in this area of public policy. We are coming up to roughly 130 days since the summit on 20 October last year, and other than the Homes for Homes initiative, as idealistically good as it is, what has the government really got to show for it? Let's go through a couple of things quickly.

There was a promise at the end of last year that QBuild would build 80 prefabricated homes at a facility this financial year. We do not even know if the facility is open. There was a promise to 'urgently' open crisis accommodation at Griffith University. It was meant to be open now—not yesterday, not the day before. It was meant to have been open already well and truly, but that will not be open now until later this year. We do not know exactly when. I will keep going. There was a promise to increase rental supply through the use of granny flats, which was the subject of heated conversation in question time this morning, yet even the Deputy Premier has admitted, 'We haven't seen that yet.' They were talking up a Housing Investment Fund which, nearly two years after being announced, is still yet to deliver a single home. There was a state government land and building audit which nobody knows the results of yet.

I would urge those opposite to stop peddling false hope and get on with delivering what is required by many Queensland families. As with many people in this chamber, I regularly have open mobile offices on the weekend and midweek. It saddens me, because at the most recent one last Saturday morning it was starting to become pretty obvious what the usual issues in my particular local area are. Because of the iconic shop I had my mobile office in front of, people came from near and far. As far as I am concerned, at the end of the day it is not for me as a public MP to turn anyone away. If someone wants to raise something with me, I will hear their point. It was becoming very, very disconcerting that the whole issue of the housing crisis was now starting to affect people from here, there and everywhere. I would urge the government to get on with delivering.

In relation to the amendments to the Retirement Villages Act, this is something that is probably long overdue. When I visit them, my retirement village constituents tell me they are looking for greater transparency when it comes to the financial information they are given, so I do absolutely say that this is a good thing. It may also have some unintended consequences, but the mere fact that people will be provided with more open, transparent and accountable documentation I think will aid their decision-making. We support this bill.