




Speech By
Amy MacMahon

MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

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**RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AND ROOMING ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; MANUFACTURED HOMES (RESIDENTIAL
PARKS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (7.27 pm): I rise to say some brief words in support of the amendments moved by the member for Maiwar calling for a rent freeze, a long-term rent cap and a guaranteed right to a lease renewal. Today we have heard many speeches from people lauding the rent caps that are being put in place for people in manufactured homes and rightly pointing out the pressure that people in manufactured homes have been under as they have dealt with rent increases that they cannot afford and that have been extremely unfair. The fact that we can do this for one group of renters but not others is mind-boggling.

Labor could be capping rents today. They know how to do it because it is in the manufactured homes bill. The measures they are putting in place for manufactured home owners are still insufficient. It is not good enough. It is not good for people living in manufactured homes or for the many other renters who have faced successive years of rent increases, but it will be a start. The justification that the minister gave this morning—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Member for South Brisbane, I remind you that you are speaking to the amendment moved by the member for Maiwar, which relates to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. You have already spoken on the cognate debate.

Dr MacMAHON: I would like to share a story from a constituent with whom I spoke over the weekend and for whom a limit on rent increases would be life changing.

I spoke with this pensioner. This woman has already been priced out of an NRAS property. She had expected that she would be able to live the rest of her life in an affordable NRAS property, but an exorbitant rent increase forced her out of that home, forcing her into another private rental, and she now feels more vulnerable than ever. She is not alone. With both federal Labor and state Labor abandoning NRAS tenants, we will see more people forced out of their homes because of rent increases that they cannot afford. This week there is data out to show that, if a rent freeze had been put in place in Queensland in March last year, renting households would have saved over \$2,000. That is money that could have been used for essentials, food, transport, health care or dental care. Better Renting Executive Director Joel Dignam said—

If people's energy or groceries bills were going up \$3,000 a year, it would be the subject of talkback radio every month ... With rent, it's almost treated as the way things are.

We know that this government can do it, because it is doing it for manufactured home renters. I also address some of the arguments that a rent freeze, rent cap or rental regulation would result in a reduction in housing stock. The ACT has had caps on rent increases for some time without a reduction in the number of rental properties. Evidence from Spain has shown no reduction in rental supply as a

result of rent control regulation. A rental stabilisation study from New Jersey found that there was little to no significant impact on new constructions. Similar evidence from AHURI shows that changes to tenancy laws have not caused investors to divest from properties. Without these measures in place, do we know what is guaranteed? If rents are not frozen, more renters will be priced out of their homes, children will be forced to switch schools because they will be forced into a new area, people will be forced into financial stress—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for South Brisbane, I understand your contribution. I bring you back to the amendment. The amendment is not an opportunity to debate rent freezes; it is about deleting the words 'now read a second time' and inserting the following words 'be considered once the government commits to legislating a freeze on rent increases'. It is a procedural amendment that you have moved to do that before the second reading. I think I have given you quite a lot of latitude. Do you have much more?

Dr MacMAHON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I urge all members to support this amendment and to think about those renters in their electorates already in financial stress who will be struggling with future rent increases.