




Speech By  
**Dr Christian Rowan**

**MEMBER FOR MOGGILL**

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

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (6.56 pm): I rise to address the cognate debate on the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 and the Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Amendment Bill 2024. I wish to focus my contribution today particularly on the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. This legislation was first introduced on 21 March 2024 by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works where it was subsequently referred to the Queensland parliament's Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee for detailed scrutiny.

I note that the stated primary objective of this legislation includes things such as to enhance renters' rights, encourage private investment, improve tenancy issue resolution pathways and stabilise rents in the private rental market. These objectives are said to be enacted through amendments proposed to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008. Accordingly, there are a number of proposed measures within this legislation, including reforming the rental bond process, extending entry notice periods and establishing protocols for the proper handling and disposal of renters' information, prescribing a rental application form that restricts the amount of information collected from prospective renters, as well as reforms to the imposition of fees and charges, including re-letting costs and specific rent payment methods.

I acknowledge that this legislation will also establish a framework for renters and property owners to agree on modifications for safety, security or accessibility, and clarify the process for personalisation modifications. Perhaps the most well-known measures that are contained within this legislation pertain to the application of an annual rent increase limit to the rental property rather than the tenancy itself, as well as the prohibiting of all forms of rent bidding.

In examining this legislation, the committee received 103 submissions, along with a separate public briefing and public hearing. In its tabled report No. 7, the Queensland parliament's Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee made one recommendation, that being that this legislation be passed. As already outlined, the Liberal National Party will not be opposing this legislation. That being said, as the parliamentary committee's examination identified, and as various stakeholders have highlighted publicly, there are many aspects with this legislation which may have significant implications and unintended consequences which deserve the further attention of this state Labor government.

Queensland is deep in the midst of a housing affordability and rental crisis under this Labor state government. Labor's consistent track record of rushed, ill-conceived and haphazard legislative changes have only exacerbated the housing crisis here in Queensland. Too often, rather than providing genuine relief for renters, Labor's various and sudden shifts in policy have created instability and uncertainty, making it harder for people to find affordable housing. We are seeing many people living in their cars in electorates right across Queensland, including in the Premier's own electorate.

The current state of Queensland's housing and rental sector only reinforces the need for well-considered and balanced reforms that address the complexities of the housing market without causing additional harm. These are matters which I raised and called on the Labor state government to address in 2021 when I addressed the debate on the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill. The state Labor government was warned that reforms which are aimed at the rental sector and the interactions between renters and lessors are an incredibly complex exercise that requires due diligence and a well-balanced approach. In the years that have followed, Labor's ongoing erratic approach to both regulatory and legislative reform has only plunged Queensland's housing and rental market into further chaos. Sadly, this has particularly impacted those who rely on rental properties. Labor's constant pivoting from one crisis to another without a clear and strategic vision has only damaged the confidence of both renters and landlords.

**Mr Tantari** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Member for Hervey Bay, any more of that and you will be warned under the standing orders.

**Dr ROWAN:** I hear those interjections from the other side, but it is this instability which has been detrimental to all involved and it has created an environment where many do not feel secure in their housing situation. That is simply not good enough here in Queensland. Ultimately, a healthy and well-functioning housing market demands a diverse range of options, with renting being a critical component. For Queensland's housing and rental market to function effectively there must be a respectful coexistence between lessors and tenants. Policies that foster mutual respect and understanding are essential to creating a stable and supportive housing environment. Instead of pitting people or segments of property—lessors and lessees—against each other, Queensland needs solutions that promote genuine cooperation within the rental market.

Despite the disingenuous actions and political grandstanding by candidates and members of other political parties, including Labor and the Greens, demonising landlords will do nothing to solve the housing crisis. In fact, it will only deepen the divide. What is more, as has been reported nationally, the hypocrisy and duplicity on this matter by members of the Greens political party truly knows no bounds, given various Greens members of parliament and senators own multiple investment properties yet continue to demonise any Australian who owns more than one property. The Liberal National Party recognises and appreciates that the vast majority of rental properties are owned by mum-and-dad investors. These are everyday Australians and Queenslanders who provide essential housing options and if the wrong balance is struck, they will be driven away from the market. Such an exodus has the potential to lead to a significant reduction in available rental properties, further exacerbating Queensland's housing shortage and driving up rents.

Whilst enacting and mandating measures that are designed to protect tenants and to ensure affordability, the state Labor government has a duty to ensure these measures do not have unintended negative consequences on the rental market and on property investors including a reduced supply of rental properties, potential decreases in property maintenance, various market distortions as well as additional financial risks for landlords which could ultimately impact the overall efficiency and health of the rental housing sector.

In concluding my contribution today, I want to reaffirm the comments provided by the Liberal National Party's member for Lockyer and member for Burleigh in their statement of reservation to the committee, wherein they stated that—

In order for Queensland to have a healthy housing ecosystem, Government decision making on housing matters must be measured, well thought out, stable and sensible. This has been severely lacking in the Government's recent administration of the housing portfolio. It is important to note this, as past decisions taken by the Government have resulted in many of the changes which are included as part of this Bill.

The only thing I would add is that, incredibly, given the state Labor government's abysmal track record on affordable housing and improving rental opportunities for Queenslanders, the Greens political party have made it clear that they intend to support the re-election of the state Labor government again this October. Once again, the hypocrisy of the Greens is unbelievable. They have shown their true colours. They preference Labor all of the time. The Greens cannot be taken seriously on the subject of affordable housing and striking the right balance between landlords and renters.

As I have said before, tenants deserve to have rights and opportunities that reflect the standards and expectations of a modern society. However, importantly, those rights must be balanced with corresponding responsibilities to the lessors and property owners. Lessors and property owners have a duty to fulfil their obligations and responsibilities to their renters and these duties must be matched by reasonable rights.

**Government members** interjected.

**Dr ROWAN:** I hear those interjections from the members opposite, but here in Queensland we have a housing crisis which has been created by this Labor government. The Greens, which intend to support the Labor government again, have no credible solutions on this issue here in Queensland.

What we need is a balanced framework. We need to have more affordable housing here in Queensland. Certainly our renters need to have available housing stock and the Labor government has well and truly failed, not only on housing here in Queensland but also on a cost-of-living crisis which they are failing to address in a comprehensive, sustainable way. There are other crises right across Queensland with respect to health, youth crime and many other matters, but when it comes to housing here in Queensland they have failed over the last three terms. They do not have a credible strategy moving forward. We know that the Greens political party, which also does not have any credible strategies whatsoever, will support and say anything to re-elect this Labor government. Queenslanders absolutely deserve better when it comes to housing here in Queensland. In October of 2024, it will be time for Queenslanders to show Labor the door.