




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (8.38 pm): I rise to address the debate on the Economic Development and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Introduced by the Minister for State Development and Infrastructure on 20 March 2024, the Economic Development and Other Legislation Amendment Bill seeks to amend the Economic Development Act 2012, the Planning Act 2016 and the Public Sector Act 2022. As per the explanatory notes, the overarching objective of this legislation is to strengthen the remit of Economic Development Queensland and provide it with the tools needed to address Queensland's housing shortage. A housing affordability and availability shortage, I might add, that has only got worse the longer this state Labor government has been in power.

To achieve the stated objectives, and as per the explanatory notes, this legislation will amend the Economic Development Act in the following key areas: firstly, in addressing housing supply, additional pathways will be enabled for Economic Development Queensland to facilitate the delivery of social and affordable housing whilst aligning with government targets and priorities; secondly, in relation to investment powers there will be the inclusion of undertaking investment activities in property assets as a function of the Minister for Economic Development Queensland.

This legislation will also establish place renewal areas to enable Economic Development Queensland to lead coordinated and integrated urban renewal through a place renewal framework. There are also amendments to enable operational efficiency by implementing measures to deliver operational efficiencies to the Minister for Economic Development Queensland's existing functions. There will also be amendments to Economic Development Queensland's corporate structure, with adjustments made in order to optimise its broad capabilities across both planning and development activities.

Whilst I acknowledge that various aspects have been specifically highlighted and addressed by previous members, I want to briefly address the amendments for operational efficiency, specifically those pertaining to priority development areas, PDAs, and broader planning priorities. I note that, as per the examination of the Queensland parliament's Cost of Living and Economics Committee, the committee report states—

An amendment is proposed requiring the MEDQ to consult with the Planning Minister prior to the making of a declaration regulation for a PDA or PPDA to ensure that this aligns with the government's planning priorities.

I acknowledge the support provided by the Planning Institute of Australia for the addition of consultation being required with the planning minister and its calls for a more collaborative approach. I also want acknowledge the committee's statement—

A number of stakeholders also submitted that it should be mandatory for communities to meaningfully contribute prior to the declaration of PDA's.

This is an incredibly important point given the significant community issues that have resulted from problematic PDAs that have occurred under the watch of various state Labor governments. By way of just one example, the Ripley Valley PDA continues to draw significant criticism and community

concern, particularly as it relates to ongoing community engagement, communication and consultation given the potential and proposed impacts associated with Scott's Farm, which includes the planned resumption of land. Scott's Farm has been in the hands of the Scott family since 1893.

Further evidence of this Labor government's failure to listen was brought to my attention by Belinda Lowe of Scott's Farm. She advised of various attempts by representatives of Scott's Farm to contact the Labor government and various departments, all of which were not followed up, including: emails to the offices of the then Queensland premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk; the then deputy premier, Steven Miles MP; as well as the Labor member for Ipswich in 2022. There were also written requests to Economic Development Queensland in 2023 and emails to both the current Labor Minister for Education and the Labor Minister for State Development and Infrastructure in March of this year.

The failure of this Labor state government to not actively engage with Scott's Farm and the Scott family, including listening to and addressing their concerns, has led to overwhelming community outrage over Labor's refusal to act. As a result of the Labor state government's failure there has been a change.org petition that has garnered almost 9,000 signatures along with a Queensland parliament petition that is approaching almost 4,000 signatures calling for the removal of Scott's Farm from the Ripley Valley PDA. The farcical nature of the Labor member for Bundamba, who is a minister in the Labor government, and the Labor member for Ipswich, who is an assistant minister in this Labor government, signing the Queensland parliament petition in essence against their own Labor government is breathtaking, because to resolve any local concerns these Labor members should be actively consulting and working with representatives of the Scott family to address these matters as soon as possible.

In returning to broader aspects of this legislation, the fact of the matter is that the Queensland housing crisis is a direct result of this third-term state Labor government's almost decade-long failure to plan and deliver new housing and improve housing affordability. Labor will always blame someone else or some obscure external factor rather than accept responsibility for their failures. Such blame-shifting and repeated policy failures only reinforce the genuine scepticism that Queenslanders have when it comes to trusting this state Labor government to actually solve and resolve Queensland's housing crisis. Labor simply cannot be trusted. Those who are living with homelessness and a lack of housing affordability are certainly telling all members of this parliament that Labor simply cannot be trusted. In an effort to appear to be doing something about the housing crisis, Queenslanders have seen from this Labor state government a round table, a Housing Summit, followed by another round table, with further dot point plans and promises. All of this, yet Queenslanders continue to struggle through a Queensland housing crisis the likes of which our state of Queensland has never seen before.

Just last month, new figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed that total dwelling approvals for the month of April in Queensland were 20 per cent below the monthly 40-year average and 25 per cent below the 10-year average. I also note there were stakeholders who, having examined this legislation, expressed their views and concerns in relation to associated issues, including rental properties and rental affordability. These concerns are valid, particularly given the devastating impacts Queensland renters are experiencing as they seek to find a roof during the current housing crisis here in Queensland.

This was made abundantly clear by the Real Estate Institute of Queensland's residential vacancy report for the 2024 March quarter, which revealed that the vacancy rate in Queensland was a paltry 0.9 per cent. This is what happens when we have governments here in Queensland that fail to plan and deliver for Queensland's growing population—a growth rate which this Labor government has overwhelmingly promoted whilst ignoring the obvious housing and infrastructure demands that such growth brings. In contrast, it is only the Liberal National Party which is committed to fixing Labor's housing crisis because it is our priority to secure Queensland's housing foundations.