




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (3.06 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak on this bill as chair of the committee and someone who has been involved with some of these issues for over 20 years. I want to start by addressing a couple of things raised by the member for Everton. I know it is easy to criticise us about housing, but I would point out that under Labor more houses each year on average have been built, approved and commenced. That is our record. It is one the LNP does not want you to hear.

The 'long-awaited' reform was the other issue the member for Everton talked about. That is my particular phrase. I said that because I have been working with people in the manufactured homes sector on some of these issues for many years. I will talk about market rent reviews, dispute resolution, and capital replacement and maintenance plans. I would also point out that when we got into government in 2015 a number of us, including the member for Kallangur—now Kurwongbah—wondered what was being done in relation to the issue of manufactured homes. Nothing was happening in 2015. Reform had stalled, so we got going. In 2017 we had a new act that introduced a code of behaviour, a dispute resolution procedure and limiting rent increases to once per year on one basis. There were great reforms in 2019 followed by more regulations, and in 2022 we started the long process of building up to the point we are today. It is long-awaited because there has been a lot of work that has been done. It has been done cautiously and judiciously, but we have also done a lot of it as well. We have made sure we got it right.

I would point out that only Labor works to improve life for home owners and renters. I think the LNP shows indifference to home owners. At the committee hearing for this bill at Deception Bay a representative from the Alliance of Manufactured Home Owners said—

I would tell you that on no occasion has the LNP engaged. We have been sending emails to all the LNP and David Crisafulli has refused to engage.

...

Let us call it what it is. He has refused to engage. We have actually written to him in the last month and asked what the LNP's plans are going forward and to date we have not received a response, but I would be really grateful if you two could go to him and say, 'Look, you need to have a plan going forward because these people need to know what you are going to do.'

Then the member for Burleigh said—

We have a plan going forward; do not worry about that.

The question is: what plan is that? Is it on housing? What plan do you have and why have you not shown it to anyone? That is telling and sums up the LNP's indifference to this sector.

I remind people why the Miles Labor government is doing this. Ordinary working Queenslanders, including those who rent, need someone on their side. When the housing market puts the squeeze on renters, it is the Labor Party that will lean in and actively intervene to protect Queenslanders. Every ordinary working Queenslander needs housing that is safe, secure and affordable. Only Labor will make that a priority—it is a central pillar of what we do.

Today, I will just talk to the Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Amendment Bill. Firstly, I am so pleased to see these reforms come through because they have crucial consumer protections. As I said, these are protections that I have been fighting for years to see happen. For example, we are getting rid of market rent reviews, and that is a wonderful thing. These rent reviews have led to site rent increases of 11, 12, 17 and up to 30 per cent in one year. The point is that you cannot have market rent reviews if one side cannot exercise market power. That is where market rent reviews fail. We are also limiting site rent increases to 3.5 per cent, or CPI, and I believe that is the eight capitals' average index. Site rent increases have been the biggest issue for home parks residents. It is the issue they have constantly talked to me about—bear in mind, I have 1,100 home park sites in my electorate.

Home parks will also be required to publish a comparison document for prospective home owners, and that document would include the range of site rents payable, what is included in the site rent and what facilities are available. Home parks will also be required to prepare a maintenance and capital replacement plan which would be accessible to home owners. The plan would outline maintenance and capital costs in the park over the next 10 years. That is a great win for transparency in these parks. The member for Everton said we had not done that yet. This is where the action is happening. It will be a great win for residents to have great transparency in these parks.

There are many more initiatives that make up what I have described as the greatest suite of reforms this sector has seen for 20 years. I will now talk about the role of market forces in this sector. As we have heard, we are delivering these reforms because of how market forces operate in this particular housing sector. These residents have little market power. They have invested in homes that are permanently tied to land they do not own, land that they rent. They cannot move their home if they are dissatisfied with the rent they pay. The only market power they have after making this large investment is to sell up and move. No other housing sector has such an imbalance of power, and that is why we must intervene.

This is why we will keep leaning in to help out these hardworking Queenslanders. It is very clear that more change is needed. I believe we need more measures that empower home owners committees. If you want to address an imbalance of power, let's empower the home owners committees to help resolve those issues. I agree that we need to find a better way for dispute resolution because QCAT is just not working for them.

There are also broader issues that we need to put on the table in the future. I also agree that we need to review the act in totality because we have to examine the whole sector in totality. We want every Queenslander to have safe, affordable and secure housing, yet this is a sector where there are homes selling for \$1 million, \$2 million, and they sit on land that is rented. The question is: is that what we want? Is that the path we want to go down—a land-rent-based housing model within Queensland?

There is no doubt that some operators are chasing the higher end of the market, and it is very clear that there are large profits to be made. Avid Property Group last week announced that they would pay \$284 million to acquire eight Living Gems sites. Hometown USA bought the Lifestyle Group for \$685 million in 2018, and Stockland bought the Halcyon group for \$620 million. I will table an article that lists all of those acquisitions.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian Financial Review*, dated 15 May 2024, titled 'Developer Avid flags \$1.4b land lease housing play' [846](#).

In conclusion, there are a couple of principles that should guide actions in this sector in the future. These villages are a haven for retirees, for those on a modest income. Let me quote one of our witnesses—

Over-50s villages are pensioner havens and have been for decades ... Australia's over-50s villages are what they are and must not be allowed to be converted into something they are not. They are the low-income retirees' havens that Australia needs, and needs lots more of. Over-50s parks and villages must not be allowed to be turned into the more expensive lifestyle communities ...

That was Bruce Hill-Webber at the hearing in Deception Bay on 23 April. Let us keep home parks as a haven for ordinary working Queenslanders who have retired.

The other important principle is co-investment. Park owners bring their own investment to home parks. Home owners bring in an equal-sized investment into these home parks as well. You need both. The sector cannot survive if one side is knocked out. Both sides need each other to build that lifestyle in these villages. All parties need to remember that, and I hope to see that principle reflected in work to come. I commend these bills to the House.