




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Record of Proceedings, 11 June 2024

HELP TO BUY (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (5.45 pm): I rise to make a contribution on this bill. I have heard members on both sides of the House speak about the implications of the housing crisis in their electorates. I have heard government members speak about what they perceive themselves to be doing about it, and I have heard the LNP opposition make a very cogent case for how the government have failed in their stated objective of getting more Queenslanders into homes.

This bill is worth supporting and that is why the LNP opposition will be doing that. If it is run well, it does offer the prospect of getting low-income people and perhaps middle-income people—although more likely low-income people—into their own home, and that is a worthy objective. I think the references that have been made to the federal opposition not agreeing to a blank bill or a blank cheque—not agreeing to support something without the detail behind it—are entirely correct and proper. When you consider that the state government here has a lamentable record of actually delivering when money is appropriated for housing, I can hardly blame them.

I heard the member for Everton speak earlier. He is obviously very across this and he is very good at pointing out where Labor has failed. I asked him if I could have some of the notes he spoke from. He has an excellent list from which, in the matter of a minute or so, you can lay down an appalling catalogue of failure on the part of this particular Labor government.

We heard about the Griffith University debacle where \$2 million was spent with absolutely nothing to show for it. There were supposed to be 90 parcels of land made available by the Catholic Church, and how many of those have now been converted with the state government into somewhere someone can live? None. I introduced Killarney Memorial Aged Care to the department, and I thank the minister at the time for allowing that. Killarney Memorial Aged Care had a very good proposal for low-cost housing for the people of Killarney. They had the designs ready to go—

Mr Stevens: They're not in the union.

Mr LISTER: I take that interjection from my honourable friend the member for Mermaid Beach. They are not in the union. I suppose you have to be in the club to expect something from this government. They had a mature and well-developed proposal to develop low-cost housing for people in Killarney. They needed a partnership with the state government. Those negotiations went nowhere. There was just no appetite or interest at all from the government.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, member for Logan!

Mr LISTER: There is an example where that failure to engage with the community sector has actually hurt people in my electorate. The \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund—that is the figure which was arrived at after the second Housing Summit, which I have heard members on all sides discuss in the course of this debate—was supposed to provide 5,600 affordable homes. We have heard that none have appeared. I heard some—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr LISTER: Yes, the tooth fairy. I have heard some hairsplitting by members opposite who say, 'No, there are 600 people who now have a roof over their head.' You do not house net more people by simply purchasing a property and converting it into housing for government purposes; you make no dent whatsoever in the housing crisis by doing that. We had the example of members of the Palaszczuk government being at the QBuild apprenticeship centre at Eagle Farm—I remember seeing fanfare and lots of social media clips of the luminaries of cabinet, most of whom are still the luminaries of cabinet—and talking about these modular homes, granny flats and so forth. The member for Everton made the point that only two of them have been delivered when 80 were supposed to have been delivered last financial year.

Mr Stevens: Only two grannies.

Mr LISTER: Only two grannies. I think grannies are not the only ones who are smarting over that, because the taxpayer is obviously paying a lot of money for that sort of mucking around. Those funds should be going to creating properties for people to live in. I hope that this scheme will help people in my electorate of Southern Downs have access to the possibility of getting their own home. That is a great thing.

Mr Stevens: If they can get water from the Emu Swamp Dam.

Mr LISTER: I take that interjection from my old friend the member for Mermaid Beach. I know that Emu Swamp Dam is a topic that keeps many of us awake at night. Yes, if we are to have more houses we will need water for those houses, particularly on the Granite Belt, so I would urge the government, as part of its elaborate Housing Strategy, to prioritise Emu Swamp Dam as well.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member, I have given you a lot of latitude, but that is going just a little too far.

Mr LISTER: Fair call, Mr Deputy Speaker. In my electorate of Southern Downs a shortage of housing has great impacts, not just the moral and social impacts. All of us have had somebody come to us and say, 'Hey, I've been renting a house for 15 years and it has been sold'—or the owner wants to redevelop or subdivide or something like that—'and I have nowhere to go. I can't afford anywhere else.' We have all, as MPs, spoken to constituents like that. That is one side of it. The other side of it is government policy. In Warwick in my electorate of Southern Downs you cannot rent a house for love nor money, and that is largely because of the demand for housing that has sprung from the MacIntyre Wind Farm.

In all sorts of areas we are finding that the economy is being distorted by spending on things that are too expensive and on the wrong things, and that kind of thing is putting people out of homes. Those people who do not have a home now and have no prospect of getting into social housing are not necessarily going to benefit from this particular bill.

Lastly, it impacts the delivery of services in electorates like mine. It can be hard enough to get a teacher, a police officer, a nurse or an ambo to a posting in some of the farther west parts of my electorate—Goondiwindi, Talwood, Millmerran, Cecil Plains. I have had principals of schools tell me that the—

Mr Power: Are you going to mention that in the budget there are funds put aside for housing for teachers in rural areas?

Mr LISTER: I take the interjection from the member for Logan. He talked about housing for teachers in rural areas. I have studied the budget. In the time I have had to look at it, I have not identified any in my electorate, but hope springs eternal. If you are the principal of a school and you have managed to get a fine teacher recruited, the system has made them available and they want to come to your school—you might be a teaching principal and you have only one other teacher to help you in the running of a school with 10 or 20 students—if that teacher says, 'I'm sorry, I would really love to take that posting up—it is a dream posting—but I can't find anywhere to live,' that means that school goes without a teacher. It is the same for the local police station, the local ambulance station, the hospital and so forth. These have real impacts in my electorate of Southern Downs. We need to have an increase in the supply of houses rather than just a scheme which enables people to access the pathway to home ownership. This is not a concept that is lost on any of us in this House, as I say, but there has been an enormous number of announcements—a glittering expose of social media talking about—

Mr Stevens: A plethora.

Mr LISTER: A plethora of social media talking about announcement after announcement, investment after investment, dollars after dollars, but nothing has been built. I say to the government: stop talking and start building.