




Speech By  
**Jim McDonald**

**MEMBER FOR LOCKYER**

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## **HOUSING AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY (PLANNING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; BUILDING INDUSTRY FAIRNESS (SECURITY OF PAYMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr McDonald** (Lockyer—LNP) (3.52 pm): I am pleased to be able to rise on these two important bills for Queenslanders. Unfortunately, I do not share the zest that the government has in these bills. In fact in relation to the Housing Availability and Affordability (Planning and Other Legislation Amendment) Bill, I would argue that the only place affordability and availability is going to be achieved is in the title of the bill.

The LGAQ, which represents 77 councils across Queensland, and the Council of Mayors (SEQ) made submissions and gave evidence on the housing availability and affordability bill and they said that this bill will not assist in the supply of housing to vulnerable Queenslanders. We know that there are more than 20,000 Queenslanders without a roof over their heads right now. As the UDIA said, when there is a housing crisis, governments should not change the rules and make it harder because every time there is a change it complicates things. They said that governments should just get out of the way of industry and let them move on with the supply.

We have talked about this many times in this House. What the government need to do is get out of the way and support the private investment in housing supply. They need to unlock some of the opportunities for improved zoning across South-East Queensland as well as the rest of the state so that when more responsible zoning is available to the developers they will lead a pathway of supply. Right now, there are 97,000 lots and 94,000 multiple dwellings actually approved but not activated under the current approval system. That is simply because they do not meet the demand and meet the supply. There are plenty of developers and councils out there who want to be able to unlock that land and provide a pathway of supply.

Zoning is one thing, but the other thing—as our deputy leader and leader have quite rightly said—is having a pathway of infrastructure that is well coordinated between Transport and Main Roads and local government. I note that the shadow minister for main roads, Steve Minnikin, is in the House here today. He has talked to me about making sure there is coordination between Transport and Main Roads and local governments so that infrastructure is delivered and those potential land parcels are unlocked. We have heard announcement after announcement over the last four or five years about some of the opportunities to the north of Brisbane and in South-East Queensland yet nothing has eventuated.

One of the important things a government must do is actually not think they have got all of the solutions, as we are seeing in these bills, particularly the housing availability and affordability bill. They cannot just say, 'We know what's best,' and put things on the table without consultation. That is one of the key things we heard over and over again from the stakeholders, whether it be local government, the UDIA or others. They said there was a lack of consultation regarding the proposed changes. Some of the proposed changes were talked about in one of the Growth Areas Advisory Committees. However, the people who were participating in that committee had to sign confidentiality agreements. We heard

that they were so fearful of what they could or could not do that they were not even consulting with the member councils. That is certainly something that was very restrictive in the open dialogue to see improvements.

I actually feel sorry for the government members of our committee because they were presented with a bill that had so many flaws in it and unfortunately the government were not going to listen, as we have seen with the bill coming back into the House. I do note the amendments to make sure that urban investigation zone is removed because that was just going to be a farce. If land parcels were locked up and the development of those opportunities was pushed out, it was going to create even more confusion for Queenslanders, local governments and the development industry.

As I said before, governments cannot just think they are going to be able to provide all of the solutions. In fact what they should do is talk to industry and get out of the way of that private investment—those mums and dads with houses and investment opportunities, whether it be the granny flats they talked about at a Housing Summit or seeing parcels being unlocked. There are so many opportunities that the private sector would be able to do. However, what we heard over and over again was that there is a lack of confidence from the private sector to invest in solutions, whether it be home-based solutions like a second dwelling at your home or unlocking land parcels. We heard that the industry was so concerned with the changes the government was making and the instability this government had created that they did not have confidence to invest in those areas of supply.

As I mentioned before, we have about 20,000 people who are homeless. This is not something that has just happened overnight. This government have been in play for almost 10 years. They are coming up with some solutions that they think are right, but thinking you are right is not the way to be successful in government. The local governments which are responsible for the planning legislation and unlocking a lot of these parcels have a lot of different opportunities and ideas that they would be able to do if they worked collaboratively with the state government. Unfortunately, we did not see that.

I note the time is progressing. I wanted to talk to the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr McDONALD:**—because I get excited—I take the interjection from the member for Nanango. I get excited talking about local government and the supply opportunities they present. In regard to the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, we submitted a statement of reservation to the committee report because the only people who actually felt the system was good were the government members of the committee and those tradespeople in industry who had the perception or thought that it was a comfort for them to have that security of payment system; those who felt it was a bit of a security blanket for them to know that they would be paid. However, let's drill down into the detail of it.

I note Paul Bidwell of the Master Builders Association gave some great evidence and told us about the failings of the system in that head contractors can make deposits into the scheme that meet a contract and, up until the day that that contract is finalised, can withdraw those funds after being receipted to tick that box. A head contractor can make a deposit and then, all the way up until the last day of that contract, actually withdraw that money so that if the subcontractors to them go bad, they will not get paid. We heard a number of times that where contracts are good, there is no problem, and that is the case for most situations. There can be no problems with hundreds of thousands of transactions every week across the state but, where a head contractor falls over, we heard that this security of payment solution is actually not working and many subcontractors were not being paid.

We offered a number of suggestions in order to fix that bill. Unfortunately, as I said, I feel for the government members on the committee. They heard the same submissions that we heard and had the same opportunities to fix both of these bills. A couple of those amendments have come in at the last moment, but it certainly is not progressing any meaningful solutions to housing availability and housing affordability. One of the reasons this government has ended up where they are is they simply are not listening to Queenslanders.

I note my colleague from Ipswich West, Darren Zanow, joining us here. Congratulations to Darren. This is my first opportunity to place on record my congratulations for the wonderful result in Ipswich. Being out there with Darren and many others listening to Queenslanders' concerns on youth crime and housing is just one of the things that the LNP has done, and will continue to do, to get the right priorities for Queensland.