




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR COOPER

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HELP TO BUY (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (5.30 pm): Housing security is one of our most urgent priorities and it is a topic that resonates deeply with people in my electorate. The Premier has been very clear with Queensland about the demand pressures that we are facing. South-East Queensland's population is likely to increase by 2.2 million by 2046, requiring 900,000 new homes to be built by then. We have a window of opportunity right now to contribute to Queensland's housing mix. If we miss that window, hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders will face the consequences.

Here is the challenge we face: Brisbane's median house price has soared to nearly \$840,000, while median unit prices have reached nearly \$500,000; the escalating costs in Queensland's construction market have pushed the price of building a new two-bedroom apartment in Brisbane to over \$1 million, making apartments that were traditionally affordable increasingly out of reach; Queensland's rental vacancy rate is alarmingly low at 0.9 per cent, leaving many older Australians who rent at risk of living in poverty during their retirement; and, home ownership is becoming unattainable for many younger Australians, forcing more individuals to rent well into their 30s and 40s.

This housing crisis is not going to be fixed by slick slogans or brochures. It will not be fixed by protests, data-harvesting petitions or political stunts. It will not be fixed if members of parliament object to housing developments in their electorates rather than engaging in the challenging but necessary work of taking constituents on the journey to understand why the suburbs they love—maybe the suburbs they have grown up in—might have to change a little to ensure that other people, including our children and our grandparents, are able to, like them, have a home.

Any responsible government is obligated to find and fund a range of diverse housing solutions to help all Queenslanders. In February this year, our new Miles Labor government announced our Homes for Queenslanders plan—a comprehensive housing plan backed by an initial and additional investment of more than \$3 billion. This is the greatest investment in housing we have seen in Queensland's history and the greatest of any state or territory in Australia.

It is our plan to ensure every Queenslander has access to safe and secure housing. It is our plan to deliver one million new homes by 2046 that will include: 53,500 new social homes; a \$160 million Renters Relief Package; a \$350 million infill fund to deliver more housing, particularly more affordable housing; and a 20 per cent funding uplift for Queensland's hardworking specialist homelessness services. This bill forms part of that plan. It supports the federal government's Help to Buy scheme, which would help 10,000 more low-income Australians to secure home ownership each year, including many older Australians who are approaching retirement.

A shared equity program, Help to Buy helps low- to middle-income earners buy new or existing homes by accessing an equity contribution from the Australian government. If buyers can contribute a two per cent deposit, they will be eligible to receive an equity contribution up to 40 per cent on the purchase price of a new home and 30 per cent for an existing home. In order for the Commonwealth Help to Buy Bill to be enacted, the states must first pass legislation. I am incredibly proud that Queensland will be the first to pass this legislation.

This bill and our Homes for Queenslanders plan have been celebrated by housing stakeholders, but not everyone agrees with our bold plan. The federal Liberal member for Dawson stated—

I don't know anyone who wants to skip hand in hand with the Australian government down the path to the first front door they have ever owned. A coalition government does not want a stake in your family home.

What an absurd statement that fails to recognise that, without government assistance, some buyers may never achieve home ownership for their family. I was disappointed to learn that the Greens member for South Brisbane has now objected to a plan to create an additional 14,000 homes in her electorate, with 20 per cent of those homes safeguarded for social and affordable housing. She was quoted by the ABC as stating—

Building these tall towers aren't going to solve the housing crisis ...

No single measure will address Queensland's housing needs, and if the Greens members continue to oppose every housing solution we put forward, as they do, and, in particular, oppose the development of housing in their own electorates then the Australian dream of home ownership is going to slip further away. The fact that this housing measure has been held up by the LNP and Greens federally is extremely troubling to me and to the residents of my community who expect more from their leaders.

On 26 October we will find ourselves at a key moment in housing policy in Queensland. Our government has developed a plan alongside stakeholders, fully budgeted and commenced. If Labor is not in government after the next election then we will fail to meet Queensland's pressing housing needs now and for generations to come. I am going to give the final words to Q Shelter, the peak body addressing housing needs and homelessness in Queensland, which said—

With the largest single investment in the state's housing and homelessness system to date, and a range of measures that address immediate and long-term issues, the Homes for Queenslanders housing plan presents a powerful once-in-a-generation opportunity for Queensland.

I commend the bill to the House.