




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 16 April 2024

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

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works) (6.50 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contribution. I acknowledge the member for Currumbin's sudden interest in affordable housing. I am not sure where that brave soldier was when her colleagues in the federal parliament were voting against the Housing Australia Future Fund and right now are blocking the Help to Buy scheme.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for Pine Rivers and member for Whitsunday, you will cease your quarrelling across the chamber because you are both on a warning.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection from the member for Everton—the man who the Leader of the Opposition has appointed as the shadow housing minister but who sent social housing backwards.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Everton, you are warned.

Ms SCANLON: He sent social housing backwards in this state. As I said in my opening remarks, with these bills we are putting our Homes for Queenslanders plan into action, sticking to our principles, making sure we are building more homes faster and making sure our tradies keep getting paid for the work they do. This bill is also about making sure that Queenslanders have safe, secure, affordable places to call home; that essential workers—our nurses, teachers and police officers—can afford to rent or buy close to where they work; that young people can grow up and start their own families in the communities that they love. To achieve that, we need to make sure that underutilised land and infrastructure we have works harder and we need to build more houses faster and close to shops, public transport, workplaces and services, and that is what this bill is all about.

I would like to address some of the specific matters raised by members during the debate, beginning with the very important issue raised by the member for Kawana and the member for Currumbin. They were upset that I did not take the full 30 minutes in my second reading speech. If the member for Kawana spent half the amount of time he put into his performances in this House into developing a housing plan, then the LNP would actually have something to talk about, but of course they have nothing. The member for Kawana claimed the bill was rushed, despite the fact that it went through the proper parliamentary process and the committee process. Those opposite might want to slow things down, but I am focused on speeding things up, making good decisions faster and building more homes. That is what industry wants and that is what Queenslanders want.

This bill is a priority for government to ensure the right mechanisms are ready and available through Queensland's planning framework to get the delivery of more homes off the ground faster. The bill recognises that the private industry builds 95 per cent of dwellings in the state, and through this

pathway the state government assists in mobilising them to boost the supply of more housing and, in particular, affordable housing. The delivery of more supply will benefit the people of Queensland, as there will be more homes overall which will mean more affordable housing overall. That is what the state facilitated development pathway is about—reducing red tape and delivering more homes faster. These measures were welcomed by the UDIA and the Property Council of Australia.

This bill also supports making sure we have the right kinds of housing. That is why the proposed amendments include the ability for the state to condition social and affordable housing on private developments. This new team in the department will use these laws to deliver inclusionary planning pilots. This is something the Greens have advocated for, and now they seem to be disappointingly railing against the very tools that will enable us to do that in a way that stacks up.

The member for Kawana also questioned our record, which is a bold move given he was a member of the Newman government. Let me be clear: on average per quarter our Queensland Labor government has approved, commenced and completed more homes than under the LNP. This bill continues the Premier's record from when he was the planning minister. As planning minister, the Premier put us on track for success, delivering the South East Queensland Regional Plan, the South East Queensland Infrastructure Supplement, the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan and the Caboolture West Interim Structure Plan. The bill delivers the tools to action these plans because on this side of the House we deliver more than just slick slogans.

The member for Kawana said the answer is 'supply, supply, supply', and I could not agree more. I would like to know how the LNP will actually achieve supply if they do not support housing in their own backyard, they do not support modular housing, as we discovered today, they do not support the Housing Investment Fund or the Housing Australia Future Fund, and they do not support the Help to Buy fund. I am not sure what the LNP do support. We know the real answer is the only thing they do support is cuts—so 'cuts, cuts, cuts' should be their slogan. Those opposite sent social housing backwards—not only was private supply lower under the LNP but also they managed to actually reduce the amount of social housing stock they had in this state.

I want to respond to some of the comments made by the member for Burleigh. As well as being the planning minister, I am the Minister for Local Government. I am committed to working with local government and that is why we are funding things like Works for Queensland, it is why we are funding local housing action plans and it is why we are providing more funding to increase planning capacity within local governments. However, it is also my responsibility to make sure local government is delivering on the housing and diversity targets set out. On this side of the House, we will work with local government—

Ms Richards interjected.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Redlands and member for Burleigh, cease your quarrelling.

Ms SCANLON:—but we cannot keep doing the same thing and expect to get a different result. When it comes to the urban investigation zone provisions, I want to be clear. Local governments had asked the state government for assistance in this space. The Council of Mayors (SEQ) said in their submission—

The introduction of an Urban Investigation Zone ... is acknowledged as a potential tool to assist councils in identifying and protecting future growth areas.

The LGAQ said that they 'appreciated in principle' the urban investigation zone. I have listened to their feedback and I am proposing amendments to the bill to remove this element so that we can continue to undertake further consultation.

On housing and development more broadly, I want to reflect on some of the comments made by those opposite about developers. Let us not forget which side of the House banned developer donations. It was this Labor government that did that. Meanwhile, the LNP fought that ban all the way to the High Court and I think we can all draw our own conclusions about what that says.

Mr Lister interjected.

Ms SCANLON: I take the member's interjection; they are still defending it. We also heard a series of frankly bizarre contributions from those opposite that had little to do with the substance of this bill and more to do with attacking the rights of renters.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms SCANLON: And unions.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gregory, comments will come through the chair.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, you are warned.

Ms SCANLON: This included, disturbingly, the Leader of the Opposition who now is apparently concerned about the war on landlords. We know that those opposite have nothing but contempt for the 30 per cent of Queenslanders who rent, but we make no apologies for delivering reform so that all Queenslanders can feel safe and secure in their homes.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Burleigh is warned.

Ms SCANLON: I will now turn to the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The members for Burleigh, Everton and Surfers Paradise asked for evidence that the trust account framework works. Well, here is some evidence for the benefit of those opposite. Since the trust accounts were first introduced in 2018 by Minister de Brenni—who I should acknowledge did a lot of work on that reform—they have secured funds under more than 1,400 contracts to the value of more than \$25.1 billion. I am also happy to advise the member for Everton, who complained about the size of the QBCC board and the conflicts of interest—matters specifically dealt with by this bill—that the bill formalises actions that have already been taken in response to the QBCC governance review. It will make the QBCC more efficient and effective in enabling industry and protecting consumers. We heard from industry that they want an efficient, transparent regulator and that is exactly what we are delivering.

A number of those opposite also said that the GST should not be included in trust money. Without GST, there is a real risk of shortfall in trust accounts. That means a shortfall in money owed to tradies. It was always intended that the full amount payable to subbies would be set aside in trust accounts, and this bill clarifies that.

While I make no apology for protecting money owed to tradies, I will also listen to Queenslanders. We have taken on board the feedback from the committee process, and my department has been working with the independent taxation expert to obtain advice and engage with the ATO to inform guidance material for industry. We will keep working with industry to ensure they understand the clarification in this bill.

I conclude by acknowledging and thanking all of those who met and made submissions to the department throughout the development of these bills. As my opening remarks emphasised, with these bills we are putting our Homes for Queenslanders plan into action and sticking to our principles.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the officers of the department and my ministerial office for their continued hard work in progressing these bills along with a number of other reforms. Those opposite like to look at things in silo. We are doing a lot of work across government to increase housing supply. I commend the bill to the House.