




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 11 June 2024

HELP TO BUY (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works) (12.48 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Like housing markets nationally, Queensland's housing sector is under pressure to meet the needs of a rapidly growing and aging population. Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home, and the Miles government is implementing our ambitious Homes for Queenslanders plan to support all Queenslanders to achieve this goal. A key action in that plan is to work with the Australian government to progress enabling legislation to get the Commonwealth Help to Buy scheme up and running as fast as possible. The Help to Buy scheme has one important purpose: to help low- and middle-income Queenslanders to purchase a home. By drastically shrinking the up-front cost of purchasing a home, thousands of homebuyers who would otherwise struggle will be able to gain a foothold in the property market. The Help to Buy (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2024 will give Queenslanders access to the scheme as soon as it becomes operational.

Despite the fact that this bill will help open the door to home ownership for thousands of Queenslanders, the LNP and the Greens continue to block the scheme in the federal Senate. Today is a key test for the Leader of the Opposition. Will he back in his buddies in Canberra and stand in the way of more Queenslanders owning their own home? He claims he is all for home ownership and has publicly backed in 'looking' at programs like this, but as soon as it was clear that the LNP were blocking the legislation in Canberra he conveniently went silent. Meanwhile, he hand-picked a candidate in Oodgeroo who called shared equity schemes 'really dangerous'. These are the kinds of people he wants on his team—people who think making it easier to buy is really dangerous.

Queenslanders can depend on the Miles government to have their back. That is why we are introducing this legislation to help Queenslanders buy their own home. On 7 June this year, the Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee tabled its report on the bill and made two recommendations. I table the response to the committee's report.

Tabled paper: Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee: Report No. 11, 57th Parliament—Help to Buy (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2024, government response [977](#).

A clear outcome of the feedback provided to the committee is the broad support for the bill and the framework it establishes. The Miles government is advocating, and will continue to advocate, to the Australian government about the detailed operational arrangements for the Help to Buy scheme to ensure these settings are appropriate for Queensland and ensure the full allocation of places for Queenslanders can be taken up. In positioning Queensland as the first participating state, Queenslanders will be able to access the scheme as soon as it becomes operational. It will also put Queenslanders at the front of the line for any unused allocations in the first year, on top of the approximate 2,000 allocated places.

Feedback to the committee during its inquiry into the bill also strongly suggested that, while the Help to Buy scheme was a welcome addition to home ownership assistance provided by governments, it needs to be partnered with other targeted policies to help more people into home ownership. The Miles government offers a range of home ownership assistance to help eligible Queenslanders buy their own home.

On Sunday, I joined the Premier and Deputy Premier to announce that we will lift the stamp duty threshold for first home buyers, exempting properties up to \$700,000 from stamp duty with a taper off to \$800,000. The first home buyers grant has doubled to \$30,000 for new homes until 30 June 2025. That is the biggest in the country. This will support eligible Queenslanders to buy a new home, which will make housing more affordable in the long term by growing housing supply.

We have also committed in our Homes for Queenslanders plan to increase the income eligibility threshold for the Queensland housing finance loan to bridge the finance gap for regional Queenslanders who struggle to get home loan finance because of where they live. Our Place—a First Nations housing and homelessness action plan—commits to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to increase their home ownership opportunities as well. We are also making our existing Sales to Tenants program more responsive to First Nations communities to help eligible First Nations social housing tenants to buy the home they are renting.

These commitments build on the existing targeted home ownership assistance programs, including the Pathways Shared Equity Loan that supports eligible public housing tenants to buy at least a 60 per cent share of the home they rent. It was this kind of program that allowed my grandparents to buy their first home. These programs changed the lives and fortunes of families for generations to come, and I am the beneficiary of that. These existing initiatives will continue to operate independently of the Help to Buy scheme and the bill does not prevent the state from implementing new home ownership assistance measures, including shared equity schemes.

I thank the committee for its detailed consideration of the bill and all those who made submissions and appeared as witnesses to inform the committee process. The bill will support one of the central pillars of our Homes for Queenslanders plan and assist Queenslanders to achieve their dream of owning their own home. For many Queenslanders, especially young Queenslanders, home ownership feels out of reach. This government does not want home ownership to be available only to those who have access to the bank of mum and dad. We are determined to keep doing what matters so that the great Australian dream of home ownership can become a reality for all Queenslanders. I look forward to continuing to work closely with the Australian government to ensure the effective implementation and rollout of the Help to Buy scheme, which will operate first in Queensland and is anticipated for later this year. The only thing that is standing in the way of its operation is the Greens and the Liberal National Party. That is something that prospective home owners of Queensland should not forget. I commend the bill to the House.