




Speech By  
**Tim Mander**

**MEMBER FOR EVERTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 June 2024

### **HELP TO BUY (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL**

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (12.54 pm): I rise to speak on the Help to Buy (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2024. The Labor Party operates like a multinational company which has state branches that do everything consistently, do what they are told and even share tag lines. They must put out a catalogue every year: ‘Choose one. Which one suits you?’

**Mr Purdie:** The socialist handbook.

**Mr MANDER:** I take that interjection from the member for Ninderry—the socialist handbook. Unlike the Labor Party, we actually think for ourselves.

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. The member for Maryborough will cease his interjections. There will be no more warnings.

**Mr MANDER:** Thanks, Mr Deputy Speaker. I appreciate that. We are a party that thinks for itself.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. The member for Logan will cease his interjections.

**Mr MANDER:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I appreciate that as well. We will not be opposing this bill because we can think for ourselves. We do not do what we are told by the organisation.

**Mr Purdie** interjected.

**Mr MANDER:** The member for Ninderry is on fire today. It was interesting to hear the Premier get up today and talk about his first budget, but it is Blocker’s 10th budget. That is whose budget it is. Blocker’s 10th budget will be announced this afternoon.

We have a housing crisis in this state. The housing crisis has not just occurred haphazardly; it has occurred because the Labor government has been in control of this state for 30 of the last 35 years. There has been a lack of planning and deterioration year after year. Here comes the government in the last quarter of the final—four months before the election—throwing everything but the kitchen sink at the electorate, thinking people will believe any word it says. The ALP’s credibility is totally and utterly shot. This bill is another example.

This bill is obviously giving power to the Commonwealth government to enact its Help to Buy scheme, which is a shared equity program designed to assist Australians to purchase new or existing homes by accessing an equity contribution from the Australian government. The scheme is an initiative, obviously, of the federal Labor government. The scheme will be open to 10,000 eligible Australians each year and is expected to run for about four years. The scheme is fully funded by the Australian government. All states and territories have agreed to progress legislation so the scheme can run nationally. That is something that we agree with.

**An honourable member:** Who’s disagreed with it?


**Mr MANDER:** I am going to come back to that later, because I have plenty of time to explore why there might be disagreement about this. I know that members are all hanging out for that commentary.

The Commonwealth legislation related to the Help to Buy scheme remains before the Senate. As has been mentioned, the scheme was originally announced during the 2022 federal election and it was originally slated that the scheme would begin on 1 January 2023. When did it come to the federal parliament? It was in February 2024. Doesn't that sound familiar—something is announced and a long time later it is finally introduced into parliament?

The Australian government released draft—I emphasise the word 'draft'—program directions for the Help to Buy scheme in April this year. The program directions will sit alongside the Help to Buy legislation and are designed to assist Housing Australia to deliver the scheme. The draft program directions contain details of the scheme including the scheme's eligibility criteria and the obligation on participants.

Stakeholders have varied views on this bit of legislation federally and how it relates to us here. The Property Council of Australia has expressed its support for the scheme but has called for the Queensland government to do more in supporting those entering the housing market. Hear, hear to that. The REIQ expressed general support for the bill but suggested the scheme may do little to assist those entering the housing market without the proper conditions in place.

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 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (3.17 pm), continuing: Before the debate was adjourned, I was talking about some of the stakeholder views on the federal government's policy. The REIQ suggested that under the scheme the number of places offered to Queensland is insufficient. They cited the need for 2½ thousand homes to be allocated to Queensland each year. The UDIA and the HIA offered their broad support of the bill and shared equity programs generally. Tellingly, some stakeholders noted that there is limited information available from the Commonwealth at this point in time and, therefore, providing feedback is difficult with the restricted information that is currently at hand. In their written submission, the REIQ said—

It is difficult to provide detailed feedback on the scheme as the Australian Government has released little detail of how the scheme will operate.

In their written submission, the Property Council said—

Initiatives such as the Help to Buy scheme are welcomed, however we wish to reiterate that boosting housing supply is an imperative factor that requires utmost priority to support this scheme. With finer details of the scheme yet to be formally announced ...

The LNP members of the committee wrote a statement of reservation that is attached to the committee report. The statement talks about how the scheme should be expanded in numbers as well as parameters so that more people would be eligible. It is not that we disagree in principle with the scheme but, given the situation with the current housing crisis, it is important that as many people as possible can take advantage of this Commonwealth program.

How will the program work practically? The machinations and the functioning of the scheme are yet to be finalised, including the eligibility criteria requirements. That is currently being finalised by the federal Labor government with consultation ending nearly 1½ years after the scheme was meant to be in operation, despite an initial promise by federal Labor to deliver the scheme in January 2023. It is now June 2024.

There are concerns about the number of place allocations that Queensland might receive through the scheme. Again, that number has not been finalised. The statement of reservation states—

The number of place allocations for Queensland in the Federal Government's Scheme is inadequate and fails to offer Queensland its fair share.

Under the Scheme, it is proposed that Queensland would be provided with 2,000 place allocations each year, over a four-year period. There are 10,000 place allocations in the Scheme nationally each year.

The committee heard evidence that Queensland is responsible for 25 per cent of all housing sales nationally so why are we not getting 25 per cent of the allocations? The allocation to Queensland from the Commonwealth government should reflect what Queensland needs. The LNP members of the committee made that point very clearly.

All of these points sound very familiar. In housing, under Labor what happens federally is passed down and happens locally. There are plenty of promises but very little delivery. There is limited if any consultation and no detail given. That is the track record of the current state Labor government when

we talk about promises that were made but have not been kept. The Griffith University student accommodation proposal was one of the great announcements that came out of the Housing Summit. Two hundred units were to be made available for the homeless. Over eight or nine months, they spent \$2 million and on countless occasions reassured people that everything was under control but then the program spectacularly collapsed. We found out afterwards that a phone call had been made to Andrew Fraser, the chancellor of the university, basically saying, 'We need an announcement for tomorrow. What can you do for us?'

If it were not true, it would be comical. Then the government made an appeal for available land. The Catholic Church very generously offered 90 parcels of land. On how many parcels of land that it offered has any construction occurred? None. It has gone dead. It is crickets. They have heard nothing.

The government's \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund, announced three years ago—do not forget that it was doubled at the Housing Summit—has not yet built a home that has somebody in it. This is a \$2 billion program. It might as well be a \$5 billion program if there are not to be any results out of it. At the Housing Summit again the then premier said that the Department of Housing would work with Australian War Widows Inc. to use properties offered by that organisation. How many of those properties have been used to house Queenslanders? Nobody knows, but I suspect it is none. The Palaszczuk-Miles government promised a QBuild Rapid Accommodation Apprenticeship Centre at Eagle Farm, having the capacity to produce one prefab home per week and 80 last financial year. When the deadline came it had built only two.

**Ms Scanlon:** You sacked all the staff.

**Mr MANDER:** I will take that interjection. We are talking about the current situation, where a promise was made by the current government. How many people are living in granny flats since that grand announcement nearly two years ago? Where is the increase? When asked, the government could not even provide any figures.

Over two years the Help to Home program, meant to deliver a thousand homes through headleasing with a budget of \$40 million, has delivered just 62 homes. The Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025 promised to have more than 750 build-to-rent apartments completed by late 2023. There are zip, zero, none. Build-to-rent projects in the Valley, Newstead and the CBD still are not complete. In fact, one of the projects will not be complete until 2027. The land audit promised at the Housing Summit was meant to take three months. It took twice as long as promised, and nearly a quarter of the land identified for residential development had been ruled out. A key announcement in last year's budget was that of an extra 500 social homes through QuickStarts. There has been nothing quick about this QuickStarts announcement. Almost a year on, the government still had not worked out where the homes would even go let alone poured a slab.

**Ms Scanlon:** That's not true.

**Mr MANDER:** I take that interjection because we asked the minister a question on notice and it was said that they did not know where they were going to be; they had not been decided yet.

Between 2015 and 2022, Queensland was the only state where community housing went backwards, with billions of dollars of federal funds going interstate and not to our state, because this government has a philosophical aversion to the community housing sector playing a bigger role than it does at the moment.

We support the principles behind the federal Labor government's Help to Buy program, but is it any wonder that our coalition colleagues have questioned it when there is no or not enough detail? How can we support something when the detail is not there? It is also difficult to believe any of the promises that are made when there are constant delays in delivering this program.

As I said initially, we will not be opposing this bill. It is important in a housing crisis that we have every option available to us to make sure people are housed. I walked through town last night and found it incredibly distressing. I refer to the hoarding diagonally opposite the Capri Hotel, where most members stayed during parliament's renovations. There are six or seven people sleeping in that 40-metre section. It is absolutely appalling that people have to live in those types of conditions in the middle of our city, no more than 500 metres from this parliament. We have to do everything possible to find roofs to put over these vulnerable people's heads.