




Speech By
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RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AND ROOMING ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; MANUFACTURED HOMES (RESIDENTIAL PARKS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (6.26 pm): I rise to speak on this cognate debate on the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Amendment Bill. Both of these bills highlight the problems being faced by Queenslanders right across the state in seeking housing. Whether it is manufactured homes and residential parks, rentals, private purchases, new builds or government housing, the problems are endemic. This is a housing crisis.

At the beginning of March there were 25,506 sites across 203 residential parks in Queensland. They provided homes to approximately 38,000 home owners. It is estimated that another 10,000 manufactured homes and an additional 55 residential parks are planned for development in this state in the next 10 years. The bill seeks to set limits on how and the amount by which site rents can be increased; address delays in selling manufactured homes; and improve transparency with new registration requirements. It is imperative that the government strike the right balance between residents and park owners.

This bill has missed opportunities because the government restricted the range of amendments and chose not to address many other issues such as conflict resolution, financial transparency and the conduct of owners and residents. The residential tenancies and rooming accommodation bill is proof of the government's mismanagement of policy and its reckless and chaotic approach to legislative changes. Policy is made on the run because it is only used as a solution to political and image problems. As the REIQ said, this bill—

... marks the fifth reform to rental laws in Queensland within as many years. Lessors and mortgage managers are fatigued by the constant legislative reform ...

Careless, badly considered and haphazard legislative changes have not helped the housing crisis. Last year the government limited increases to every 12 months. The impact was that, when the 12 months were up, property owners ended tenancies with renters when the term of their lease expired. This allowed them to enter a new lease with new renters at a higher price. The policy was a direct consequence of a thought bubble from a former premier who floated the idea she was considering rent caps. It was a thought bubble which made it even tougher for renters to find a home.

Earlier this month the REIQ chief executive officer said that curbing the rental crisis requires government support in the form of social housing and rental assistance. She said—

... the rental market will still heavily rely on everyday citizen investors choosing to rent out their properties ...

and called on the government to recognise—

... the crucial role they play in housing Queenslanders and encouraging them ... to do so.

This bill makes amendments regarding controlled rent increases; modifications and personalisation by renters of a property; rent bidding; privacy provisions for renters, including entry notices, documents required for applications and storage of personal information; changes to the bonds process; and fees and charges. Renting is one of the options needed in a healthy housing market. The housing crisis has deteriorated under this government. Labor has lurched from chaos to crisis. Treating the housing crisis as a political problem and a media problem means that Labor has done untold damage to the housing market in this state. It has demonised sectors, mum-and-dad investors and landlords and pitted people against each other. It either treats problems in a silo or ignores them. It is hard not to be cynical about the government's approach. Housing forums, media events and press releases do not solve the issues. You cannot put a roof over someone's head with a media release. The pressures did not appear overnight. They have built up over years. Much of the housing crisis can be laid at the feet of the government. It has been in power for almost 10 years.

Legislation has originated from ill-considered thought bubbles. Kneejerk and haphazard legislation is continually having to be amended. It has cynically repeated false promises to deliver and it has not released enough land for new homes. It never planned or forecast how many social homes were needed. It continually neglects the community housing sector. The REIQ said that the housing crisis needs long-term solutions, including a concerted effort towards improving productivity and affordability in the construction of new dwellings that are essential to fixing this supply issue. Again, Labor's policy mismanagement has exacerbated the problems. The systemic failed timber policies spanning years of successive Labor governments have directly resulted in increased housing and renovation costs. It is almost 4½ years since the government promised a timber action plan. In 2019, it promised to undertake a two-year study to identify sustainable future options for timber supply. We are still waiting. Meanwhile, contracts for native timber logging will cease at the end of this year. The severe shortage of timber is pushing up renovation and building costs.

In the middle of a housing crisis, the government is unable to understand the contribution of its anti-forestry, anti-timber agenda. It is complicit in exacerbating the crisis. As a result, Queenslanders are paying more for housing, rent and renovations. The potential unintended consequences from this latest bill are steeper rent increases, a reduced number of rental properties due to hurting investor confidence and limiting the choice for tenants on how they might want to structure their rent payments.

A healthy housing market needs a mix of options. I regularly receive complaints about the housing market in my own electorate. People struggle to access safe and secure housing. It is one of the most difficult issues to resolve. A healthy vacancy rate is between 2.6 per cent and 3.5 per cent. A tight market is between zero per cent and 2.5 per cent. The Real Estate Institute of Queensland's March quarterly rental report showed Gympie vacancies were at 1.1 per cent. My office fields calls from distressed residents trying to find crisis accommodation. Too often we are told that there are no available vacancies. Private renters contact me distressed that it is getting harder and harder to find somewhere to live. Whether you call it social or crisis housing, there is very little available across the Gympie region. The pressure on the private rental market puts pressure on the social housing list. People are living in tents, under bridges, in the main street and in their cars. Charity groups—those that provide help for the vulnerable—are being stretched. The situation has deteriorated so much that, three years ago, former Gympie Citizen of the Year Marlene Owen co-founded the Gympie Regional Homeless Assistance group to feed the homeless and vulnerable members of the community.

The government must get the mix right between renters, landlords, home owners, mum-and-dad investors and residential park owners. Queenslanders and Gympie residents are paying the price because housing has been treated as a political issue. When people are living in their cars, in tents or are couch surfing and when families are being split and forced to live apart, the last thing they need is haphazard and reckless legislation, spin, platitudes and trickery. I do not oppose the bill.