




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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PRIVATE MEMBER STATEMENT

Charters Towers, Housing

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.54 pm): I rise to talk about accommodation in Charters Towers and the Eventide site. An accommodation crisis is gripping all of Queensland, and in Charters Towers it has now become a big issue. There is a tent city, if you like, at Sellheim now. I have had businesses reporting they had shut down their business because they could not get workers as they were sick of living in caravans and they had to leave town. It is at a crisis level.

The great part of the situation is that there is capacity to provide 54 units on the old Eventide site, the old people's home. A private investor has said, 'I'll do them up as long as I can recover the costs from the rent. I'll do a cheap job and the government doesn't have to spend a cent.' What a fantastic solution for the government. I have taken that to the government—I took it to the previous government as well—and said, 'Here's a solution for you.' The government had done consultation without consulting me or the Townsville Hospital, and the current mayor, Liz Schmidt, said that she did not know anything about it, either. The new hospital has not been announced and we seem to be a long way off getting even an indication of funding for it, but the government is saying that we cannot possibly have these 54 units because they are going to bulldoze them to put the new hospital there—and not on the four hectares of vacant land that has services and access connected on the other side of Eventide. I table that document.

Tabled paper: Map, undated, depicting vacant land proposed for development and existing units for redevelopment in the Charters Towers electorate [1710](#).

There is a large four-hectare site on the other side of Eventide where everyone thought the new hospital was going. However, the government are not going to use that site and they are going to bulldoze those 54 units instead because, according to their reasoning, the admin building is closer.

I can say for a fact that the Laura Johnson Home in Mount Isa did 75 rooms with \$18 million or \$20 million and they repurposed their old admin building. Jay Morris did the work and they repurposed about 16 rooms out of that. That is what the government have to do here. I am trying to save the government money and address these problems, but the minister has refused to do it.

I am appealing to the good conscience of the government. They must look at this. I am trying to give the government an affordable solution for 54 units. The council in Charters Towers is onside. We all want it. There was limited consultation with the mayor and me on this. In fact, the first business case had what I am saying is an option on that spare block of land. The whole town thought the new hospital was going on the spare block of land, which makes sense because it is the big parcel and not squashed on the front of the site where all of the other buildings were bulldozed.

This is madness and it speaks badly of a government that is not being efficient. That is why we have government—to come in and say, 'That doesn't make sense.' I want the government to replan that and save those units to provide accommodation for Queenslanders where it is desperately needed. It is an appeal to the government. Please step in and review this decision.