




Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 13 March 2025

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (SUPPLEMENTARY 2023-2024) BILL;
APPROPRIATION (SUPPLEMENTARY 2023-2024) BILL**

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (8.17 pm): For honourable members who are disappointed with the quality of members for Bundaberg after that contribution, I have some great news—Batty's back! Our former member for Bundaberg is our candidate for Hinkler, and I know he is going to do an outstanding job in that new role and we look forward to seeing him be successful in the federal election in the not-too-distant future.

The Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill represents the latest example of Labor's 10 years of fiscal vandalism in Queensland, revealing the final part of their record \$9 billion overspend last financial year. After a decade of Labor, Queensland is facing an unprecedented housing crisis. People from all walks of life are struggling to find a safe, secure and affordable place to call home. Instead of delivering outcomes, Labor spent years wasting money, making promises they never kept and leaving our most vulnerable Queenslanders behind. We have seen it all before. Labor talks a big game on housing, they are obsessed with getting headlines, but when it actually comes to delivering roofs over the heads of people, they failed. Their failure has real consequences for Queenslanders doing it tough. We see it in this bill—an overspend of \$137 million in the housing portfolio with very little to show for it.

Let's talk about Labor's mismanagement of their so-called Housing Investment Fund. This fund was meant to be a game changer. Labor promised it would build 5,600 new homes over the time it was meant to be running when the fund was topped up to \$2 billion in October 2022. But in reality, in the over three years the fund was open, it did not complete a single new home during Labor's time in office.

For a fund launched in 2021, the data shows that as of 31 October 2024—I have been generous with the time I have chosen—the Housing Investment Fund delivered 678 existing homes which were purchased from the private market. Not a single new build was delivered during Labor's time in office. We saw major blowouts on the Housing Investment Fund's projects under the former government which meant the fund would deliver 1,600 fewer homes than they promised—a fact they hid and which only became public knowledge for Queenslanders when we came into government and got our incoming briefs.

Then, of course, there is Labor's sweetheart deal with the CFMEU: Best Practice Industry Conditions, BPICs. These would have resulted in rents rising an additional seven per cent over the next five years, or 22,000 fewer homes being built across our state. One of the biggest issues was the complicated BPIC prequalification system for contractors and subcontractors to undertake government projects. I have shared this advice before but it is important to reiterate. It was advice that was commissioned by the former government on the impact of BPIC, and it quantified this impact on the building and construction sector. It found that, of the 176,000 QBCC licenced trade contractors and subbies in Queensland, just 204 were certified under the BPIC prequalification system.

Labor's CFMEU funnel had major flow-on effects. It meant that projects took longer and cost more to get built. It would have increased our construction costs by \$17.1 billion over the next six years according to Treasury modelling—most of it in the transport portfolio of my colleague next to me. That is not just a failure; it is an insult to every Queenslander struggling to find a place to call home, struggling to put food on the table or stuck in traffic because the infrastructure we need was not delivered. These failures show a complete disrespect and disregard for Queenslanders' money.

Mr Bailey interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: It is ironic that the member for Miller is interjecting. The Crisafulli government is also repairing the critical housing maintenance black hole left by Labor's neglect of Queensland government managed housing. A failure by the former government to properly fund the maintenance budget has left thousands of homes at risk of falling into disrepair without our urgent intervention. Not only have Labor failed to build homes; they have also failed the frontline workers who help Queenslanders at risk of homelessness every single day. Our dedicated specialist homelessness services provide emergency accommodation and crisis support and help to get Queenslanders back on their feet. These services are stretched already and yet, instead of giving them the funding certainty they need, every financial year the former government would leave them hanging.

How is it that the former government could waste billions of dollars on cost blowouts for major projects but could not find the funding needed to ensure homeless Queenslanders got the support they deserved? We will not. We will deliver a 27 per cent uplift in funding across the forwards, as we said we would in the last budget. By committing to a 20 per cent uplift for our specialist homelessness services we will give frontline workers across over 90 organisations the certainty they need to do their job without wondering whether funding will be coming in the next budget. Under Labor they were dismissed, but we recognise the important role these workers play in supporting people experiencing homelessness to access the help they need and to get into secure housing.

Let's not forget what we are talking about: people who desperately need a home. We are talking about families with young children forced to live in cars; older Queenslanders who have worked their entire lives and are now struggling to keep a roof over their heads; young people trying to escape domestic violence left with nowhere to go because the former government added fuel to the fire of the Queensland housing crisis.

The failures of the former government are clear, and the Crisafulli government will clean up Labor's mess. We are working to cut red tape and get more homes built. We are working alongside local governments—not going to war with them—to deliver the houses that Queenslanders need. We are committed to supporting specialist homelessness services with the funding certainty that they deserve, and we will make sure the budget is managed properly and with respect for taxpayers' money.