




Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 10 June 2025

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Social and Affordable Housing

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (2.25 pm): We are up for the fight and we will be going into bat on behalf of the 52,031 people on Queensland's social housing waitlist. That is how many Queenslanders are stuck in limbo, waiting for the dignity and stability that comes with having a safe, secure and affordable place to call home because of Labor's failures over the past decade. As of 31 March this year, that is an 81 per cent increase in the social housing waitlist over the period of the former Labor government's decade in power. It is an 81 per cent increase that the so-called self-appointed champions of social housing oversaw over the past decade.

We released this data early, ahead of the date it was required to be released under the system set up by the member for Gaven. The member for Gaven set up the current system for releasing social housing data but, unlike the former government, we believe in openness and transparency so we released that data early for Queenslanders to see, and those numbers speak for themselves. They expose the devastating consequences of Labor's decade of failure to invest in social and community housing and to empower community housing providers to grow. Over almost a decade, they delivered an average of just 509 new social homes per year. No matter how glossy the brochures or how great the press conferences, the reality was that they failed to have social housing growth keep pace with demand and vulnerable Queenslanders have paid the price.

However, the Crisafulli government is not here to paper over problems. It will fix things and deliver—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order, members! Minister, please pause for a moment. I do not like interrupting the person on their feet but I could not hear what he was saying. Members on my left, please, order.

Mr O'CONNOR: We are here to fix things and to deliver better outcomes by reforming our housing system. One of the first things we did was launch a comprehensive review into how public housing is managed because under Labor the system was allowed to drift into disrepair. We found a case where a household with an income over \$200,000 is living in heavily subsidised housing, paying just \$200 a week in rent. That is not just unfair; that is indefensible. That is one example from our housing officers. In another example, a family in Townsville with a household income of over \$160,000 is paying less than \$190 a week in rent. In both cases, those tenants were eligible when they entered the system but their circumstances have changed and that is great. We welcome aspiration. However, the former government failed to act. They failed to update rents. They failed to reassess eligibility. They failed to

help the people who are still waiting. In many ways those are social housing success stories. Those households were supported when they needed help, but their circumstances have changed and it is time to take the next step so that another family can have the support that they so desperately need.

Everything we are doing is about making sure social housing is there for those who genuinely need it. That is why we are restarting rent reviews and eligibility assessments. That is why we are putting fairness back at the heart of the system. This is about the 52,031 eligible Queenslanders who are on the waitlist. That is whose side the Crisafulli government is on and that is the number that drives us to deliver change.

While we fix the system, we are also building for the future. The 509 homes, on average, that Labor delivered per year barely scratched the surface. We are ramping up to deliver over 2,000 new social and community homes a year and building a pipeline for the long term with transparency, accountability and urgency. We are working side by side with the community housing sector, with whom we have locked in a master agreement. Those opposite have gone quiet because even after seven years they could not get that sorted. This week our department is meeting with providers to finalise the transition to this master agreement, with the goal of bringing on board as many as possible in the next 12 months. This agreement has brought 2,000 outdated and not fit-for-purpose agreements down to just over 100.

We are unlocking surplus land held by churches and charities. We have increased funding for emergency and crisis accommodation. We have strengthened the immediate housing response to ensure it is better targeted to Queenslanders with the greatest need by working alongside our specialist homelessness services.

Labor saw people on the waitlist as statistics, as numbers to politically manage; we see them as Queenslanders. Labor failed to deliver the housing supply our state needs. We are making it our top priority and there will be more to say in the upcoming budget.