




Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Social and Affordable Housing

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (9.51 am): A centrepiece of our upcoming budget will be to deliver more housing for Queenslanders in every part of Queensland. It will further lay the foundations for the fresh start we promised. With 52,031 Queenslanders on the social housing waitlist, it is more important than ever for our entire housing system to support those who need it most. Under the former Labor government that basic principle was abandoned. Nearly half of all public housing tenants did not have a rent or eligibility check for over five years, and for some it was even longer. That meant households on incomes as high as \$200,000 were living in social homes, paying less than \$200 a week in rent, while tens of thousands of vulnerable Queenslanders were left waiting for housing. This was a monumental failure of governance by Labor, and the Crisafulli government is working hard to fix it.

From 1 July we will be restoring fairness to Queensland's social housing system by reintroducing annual rent reviews and ongoing eligibility checks for all public housing tenants. This will make sure that social housing goes to those who are the most vulnerable in our state. Under our new approach all public housing tenants will have their rent and eligibility reviewed each year. Households earning or with assets over the threshold will pay market rent while being offered extensive support to transition into other forms of housing. Any identified rent increase will be capped at a maximum of \$15 per week, so tenants currently paying below the long standing 25 per cent of their income in rent will transition fairly and gradually to their correct rent.

We will also be encouraging voluntary downsizing—or rightsizing—by offering relocation incentives, including paying moving costs, and rent-free periods to help tenants who choose to move into homes that better suit their needs. Let me be clear: no tenant will be forced to downsize. With over 8,000 underoccupied public homes that we know about and more than 26,432 applications active on our waitlist, we must do all we can to use our existing homes better, especially with more and more beautiful homes becoming available, and there are a lot more to come.

Our tenancy management approach is part of our plan to ensure more Queenslanders have a place to call home. We are empowering our housing officers to do what they do best: support the Queenslanders who need a roof over their heads. I thank them for the work that they do in housing service centres and in outreach activities across Queensland.

We also know that the most important piece of the puzzle is increasing housing supply, and we have set a target of 53,500 more community homes by 2044. Labor's failure to build new homes is one of the main reasons we are in this situation. Despite endless glossy brochures and announcements during their decade in power, they delivered just 509 new social homes, on average, per year. Unlike Labor, who abandoned basic, bare-minimum housing system management, we are restoring fairness

to tenancy management and embedding equity across our social housing system. We are backing it with record investment into building more social and community homes and better supporting those at risk of homelessness and the services that care for them.

Social housing should be part of the foundation for those who need a hand up, not a subsidy for those who no longer qualify. It certainly should not be a system that leaves over 52,000 people languishing on a waitlist while households earning six figures get a free ride. This is all about restoring fairness and embedding equity to make sure our social housing system works as it should for those in the system and for those waiting to have somewhere to call home.