



Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor
MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 26 August 2025

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS COMMITTEE, REPORT

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (4.07 pm): I want to use this opportunity to correct some of the scare campaigns that we have unfortunately seen the Labor Party share.

Mr Head: They'd never do that.

Mr O'CONNOR: They would, member for Callide. You would be shocked to hear it, but they would. I will take that interjection. Scare campaigns were included in the statement of reservation to the committee's report. We did have some hard-hitting questions from the failed former housing minister, now shadow housing minister. One of them was: 'Director-General, you were the former director-general for housing under the previous Labor government?' Yes, he was; he was her director-general. I am glad we could clarify that.

The first line of questioning from the member for Gaven was around \$74 million in operational funding that we have in our housing program to deliver our housing pipeline. That money is to help support our attempts to quadruple the number of homes that we are delivering. On average Labor delivered 509 homes per year. Over the last decade we have made a very clear commitment to ramp that up to delivering over 2,000 social and community homes.

This funding that the former minister, now shadow minister, was attacking included funding for 74 public servants who are involved in delivering social and community housing across Queensland and who were only funded to 30 June. They are public servants who are essential to our delivery of more housing across Queensland, particularly as we deliver more housing than the former government could dream of. I will defend them every day of the week because they do an outstanding job. They have a new process that will opening very soon that will be an always open procurement process. They deserve to be there and they deserve to have the job certainty that they now have under the Crisafulli LNP government.

At the committee hearing the former minister, now shadow minister, made a ridiculous claim that this government will be selling 1,000 social homes. That claim was not based on a shred of evidence at the hearing. The director-general, who was, in fact, the former minister's director-general—just to remind the member for Gaven—confirmed at estimates that there is no recommencement of a sales program. Like every government before us, including Labor, we are properly managing our portfolio. That sometimes means disposing of homes that have been damaged by natural disasters, disposing of end-of-life stock or sites that simply are not suitable for delivering social housing. I very much look forward to highlighting that ridiculous claim the member for Gaven raised of selling 1,000 homes and to coming back over the next 12 months towards the next budget to show how false it is. This is not a fire sale; it is basic asset management.

The member for Gaven raised again, as has been done repeatedly, our updated guidelines for our Immediate Housing Response which were designed with the specialist homelessness service sector. I will quote directly from the hearing transcript—

Ms SCANLON: Director-General, as a follow-up, it is the case, though, that the guidelines prevent someone from getting emergency housing if they are not on the Social Housing Register; correct?

Mr Cridland: No, that is not correct. It does not prevent them from getting emergency housing.

The director-general corrected the record. It is a flat-out false claim and the member for Gaven should stop making it as frequently as she does. Households in short-term accommodation are supported to connect with our housing service centres and to begin the process of getting onto a longer term housing pathway, as it should be.

The member for Gaven also went in to bat for the pathways shared equity program. I can advise, as we found out during the hearing, that the success of that program was to have not one loan settled in 2024-25. There was one loan applied for in that financial year, but it was settled in 2025-26. Is it any wonder that we are in the housing crisis we are in given that that is the measure of success? We, of course, have our Boost to Buy program, which will be the most generous shared equity scheme in the nation, and we are very proud to be delivering that.

In the public works portfolio, we saw a failure of the former government to provide ongoing capital funding beyond 2026-27. We were very clear that we are looking at a new way of delivering government employee housing. We are very keen to be working across government to do that.

In the youth portfolio, the member for Nudgee got 18 of the 25 minutes available and still found reason to complain. Instead of asking us how we are empowering young Queenslanders, there were many questions—some that I will not dignify by raising—that were far outside the realm of the youth portfolio.

While Labor runs scare campaigns, this government is delivering solutions. We very much look forward to seeing the impact of our record housing budget over the next 12 months.