



Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

First Nations, Housing

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (2.26 pm): Safe and healthy housing is central to closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. During my recent visits to the Torres Strait, Yarrabah and Palm Island, I have seen firsthand the progress we are making and the challenges that remain. Seven new modular homes built by tradies and apprentices in our QBuild Cairns factory have been barged to Horn Island. Built to withstand the harsh tropical conditions, they will soon be ready for tenants to move into. Another 10 homes have been delivered to Palm Island—the first homes in this community since 2018. Across Cape York, 36 homes have been completed since last November. In Yarrabah, seven modular homes with three or four bedrooms are expected to be welcoming residents by the end of the month. A 34-lot residential land subdivision in Napranum will soon support the delivery of 38 new social homes and we are also delivering the first stages of a 22-lot residential land subdivision in Woorabinda.

We have work underway on more than 321 new homes, 55 extensions and 281 new land lots as part of our growing housing pipeline for First Nations communities. These homes are being delivered as part of the Crisafulli government's record \$5.6 billion social and community housing investment over four years alone, including \$242.2 million specifically for these remote and discrete communities. We are also delivering on our commitment to expand opportunities for home ownership in Queensland's Indigenous communities with the launch of the Palm Island Home Ownership Scheme. This rent-to-buy scheme, delivered in partnership with the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, will create an accessible, realistic pathway to home ownership for the very first time.

While these investments are delivering results, we must also face the reality that the cost of delivering and maintaining housing in Queensland's remote and discrete communities is growing faster than ever. After years of poor planning and underinvestment by the former government, along with the increasing size and age of our housing portfolio and rising costs across all trades and materials, there is a real amount of pressure on the system. Over their decade of decline, Labor let too much maintenance work bank up for too long, turning what should be minor repairs into urgent and expensive jobs. Our budget invests \$325 million in social housing maintenance this year alone—more than Labor's last budget—but the money is not going as far as it used to.

These communities deserve a housing system that delivers for them. That means moving away from the former Labor government's stop-start, reactive model that is failing councils and residents and shifting to a proactive, cyclical maintenance model—one that plans work ahead, clusters local jobs and ensures homes stay safe, healthy and livable. First Nations councils are our delivery partners in this work to go beyond just maintaining homes; they are providing local jobs, skills and income in communities where opportunities are limited. That is why our government is committed to working in a genuine partnership with these councils to improve how maintenance is planned, funded and delivered. We are fixing the system we inherited because every Queenslanders, no matter where they live, deserves a safe and healthy place to call home.