



Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor
MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Social Housing

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (2.42 pm): This is a perfect opportunity to provide some important context because there are far too many Queenslanders struggling with housing insecurity after a decade of decline under Labor. Because of the building and construction industry that those opposite oversaw, 77,000 fewer homes have been delivered across this state since 2018. Imagine, member for Bundaberg, if we had 77,000 additional homes right now? That is the finding of the independent Queensland Productivity Commission; that is not a political claim. The former government delivered on average 509 social homes a year over their decade of decline. They oversaw an 81 per cent increase in the social housing register. They oversaw the least productive job sites in the nation, as I just ran through. They oversaw rents increasing over 60 per cent. They also oversaw the lowest rate of home ownership of any state in the nation.

We are committed to turning things around. In our first year we have made some big progress. Earlier the Deputy Premier ran through some of the changes we have made to supply—98,000 lots unlocked through the Residential Activation Fund. In terms of our target to deliver 53,500 social and community homes by 2044—years sooner than the former government's target—in our first year we already have more than 5,700 social and affordable homes in construction or under contract across Queensland. We have delivered more than 1,640 social and community homes since January this year, with more than half in partnership with a community housing provider.

Even if you only want to count the homes that have been contracted under the Crisafulli government—if you only want to be a bit unkind and if you are a failed former minister and you want to try to protect your legacy and you only want to let our new government claim the homes that we have contracted ourselves—that is 3,343 homes since 1 November last year. Behind every one of those homes is a Queenslander whose life has changed. Earlier this year I met Alberto and his wife, Gina, who were living in a van behind our local Hungry Jack's in Labrador. They were able to move into a beautiful new social home in Biggera Waters that we delivered. I welcomed Tanya and her dog Googy to their new home in Caboolture alongside the member for Pumicestone. Tanya was rebuilding after 18 months of experiencing homelessness following a tragic storage facility fire. In Mackay I met Heather, who finally gained the security she needs to care for her grandchildren and to take part in her local pickleball club.

In Mackay, when we were turning the first sod for some new homes on a site that had sat empty for eight years, our QBuild workers told me, 'Minister, we felt like we had been doing more mowing than building over the last decade.' We are turning that around. These moments matter. They are the reason we are investing a record \$5.6 billion over this four-year period alone from our first budget. It is why we are now the only state in the nation to lock in perpetual funding for community housing delivery beyond the political cycle to give those providers the system they need to deliver, to plan, to get long-term housing out of the ground. It is all about actual delivery, not just making announcements.

We backed a streamlined master agreement—something the former government announced back in 2017—which takes over 2,000 outdated arrangements down to just 114. Earlier we heard an attempt at another scare campaign from the Leader of the Opposition, who claimed there have been changes to social housing eligibility. There have been no changes to social housing eligibility—no changes at all to the eligibility for social housing. They are the same eligibility criteria that had been there for many years under those opposite.

What has changed is that we are no longer letting property owners live in social housing. We are no longer letting high-income earners live in social housing. We have identified more than two dozen property owners who were able to live in social housing under the failed policies of the Labor Party and over 155 households who were high-income earners living in social housing while there were people on the waitlist. We have invested over \$600 million into more crisis accommodation. After a year of delivery there is a long way to go, but we are making progress to turn around the housing crisis we inherited after a decade of decline that has led to many tragic situations across Queensland.