

Speech By

Hon. Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Social Housing

Hon. ST O'CONNOR (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (2.30 pm): For too long Labor's answer to homelessness was booking hotel rooms and thinking that the job was done—no policy framework, no sustainable service model, no plan for what came next for far too many Queenslanders. Its program was on track to cost over $250 million a year if changes were not made to prioritise our most vulnerable. That is a quarter of a billion dollars a year on a short-term bandaid. Labor's model saw thousands of families stuck in motels for months, sometimes years—a completely inappropriate environment for that length of time. Its no-questions-asked approach left the system wide open to misuse as well. We found people who already lived in social homes being given taxpayer-funded hotel rooms in areas where they just wanted to have a holiday, and even now Labor still advocates for this failed approach. Some of the cases raised by the Labor Party in the media recently have included calling for a household that reported to us that they earned almost $2,300 a week to be given a taxpayer-funded hotel. There was another case of a household that trashed their hotel room not once but twice, causing tens of thousands of dollars of damage, and Labor was in the media calling for them to be given a third hotel stay.

Every dollar spent on this broken system is a dollar which cannot be put into solutions which actually help people out of homelessness. That is why we have been driving change and focusing on longer term housing outcomes. We tasked our housing officers to work on transitioning long-stay households that have been in hotels and motels for months, or even years, into homes. Since last September they have transitioned 1,918 households, and that is just some of the over 3,500 households supported by homelessness services to move out of hotels since last July alone. I want to commend Matt Nye, Kirby Cook and the entire HOME team in our department who have been prioritising that work. We have increased funding to homelessness services as well—almost $600 million in additional funding in last year's budget and a further $450 million this year—and we are spending it on better ways of delivering housing help. Our government is building a record number of social and community homes and we are delivering supported accommodation projects at scale across Queensland. Supported accommodation gives vulnerable Queenslanders a roof over their head with onsite services, creating a genuine path to long-term housing.

Right now our construction program has over 7,000 social and affordable homes under contract or construction across Queensland. That is a massive turnaround from the last decade, when an annual average of just 509 social homes were added across the system and nearly 2,000 social homes were sold by the Labor Party. How do those numbers compare? The member for Gaven in particular loves to talk about affordable housing, but how many affordable homes did the member for Gaven actually deliver when she had the chance to be the housing minister of Queensland? Over the entire last term of the former Labor government there were 100 affordable homes delivered—25 homes a year, 100 in four years. I actually had to triple check with the department that that figure was accurate because it is

so low and it is so far from their rhetoric. How about us? How about the Crisafulli government? We hear those constant claims from the Labor Party that we have apparently cut affordable homes, but how many have we actually delivered compared to its 100 homes in its last term in office? So far—

Government members interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am not taking those interjections, Premier, because they are far from the number. So far, the Crisafulli government has delivered 1,013 affordable homes, and in half the time.

Government members interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: I take that interjection: 10 times more in half the time.

Mrs Frecklington: What were you doing? Seriously!

Mr O'CONNOR: What were they doing? I take that interjection.

Government members interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: There are so many interjections to take such as those opposite being busy talking about the problem but not doing anything about it. We have a further 2,043 affordable homes underway right now. That is around 3,000 affordable homes that our LNP government will deliver in our first term against just 100 affordable homes delivered by Labor in its last term, and that is the difference—talk versus delivery, hotels versus homes. Our Crisafulli government is turning around the housing crisis and delivering more places to call home across Queensland.