



Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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HOME OWNERSHIP AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (3.55 pm): I rise to support the Home Ownership and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 and our commitment to moving Queensland from last to first on the home ownership ladder. I start by commending the Treasurer and Minister for Home Ownership for his efforts in this space.

Mr Boothman: He's a great Treasurer.

Mr O'CONNOR: I take that interjection; he is a great Treasurer. Thank you, member for Theodore. For Queenslanders who are working hard and saving for their first home, their governments should be doing everything they can to make that goal easier to achieve. For a decade, the former Labor government let that dream slip further away. They left Queensland languishing at the bottom of the national home ownership ladder, with declining housing approvals, the least productive construction sites in the country and a generation of Queenslanders wondering whether they would ever have the opportunity to achieve their aspiration and own their own home.

Labor waited until its last budget to show any interest at all in supporting first home buyers. In contrast, within our first 10 sitting days our Crisafulli government abolished stamp duty for eligible first home buyers buying or building a new home. That is 10 budgets of inaction from Labor versus 10 sitting days of action from the Crisafulli government. That tells Queenslanders all they need to know about which party in this place made home ownership a central priority of the government of our state.

Before turning to the detail of the bill before us, I want to address some of the comments made by the shadow minister, the member for Gaven, in her contribution. She is my predecessor as housing minister, but her record means that she has absolutely no right to lecture anyone about the delivery of housing in this state. On rents, the member for Gaven in particular has a selective memory because, on her watch, between June 2023 and June 2024 median rents increased in Queensland by \$70 a week. That is a 14 per cent annual increase—the largest increase in rents on record. For households in our state, that meant they had to put over \$3½ thousand extra towards their rent each year.

We heard a lot of talk as well from the member for Gaven and many of those opposite about affordable housing. What did they actually deliver in the 10 years they were in government in this state? How many affordable homes were delivered by the Labor Party?

Mrs Kirkland: Was that a big zero?

Mr O'CONNOR: It was 100 actually, which has two zeros in it, member for Rockhampton. They delivered 100 in their final term, which is an average of 25 a year. They delivered 100 affordable homes, despite the rhetoric they have been bringing into this debate. They had record rent increases and an average of 25 affordable homes delivered each year in their final term. The member for Gaven has plenty of criticism for our government but, remarkably, few explanations for her own record.

Since the Crisafulli government was elected we have delivered 1,041 affordable homes, and work is underway on another 2,015 affordable homes. We have already delivered 10 times the number of affordable homes that the former Labor government delivered in their entire final term, and we have thousands more coming. These are not hypothetical houses. They did not just exist in the member for Gaven's press releases—like the homes that we hear the Labor Party claim we have apparently cut. These are real homes. These are homes that are contracted for delivery or homes that are under construction or homes that have been built.

On rental bonds, the member for Gaven complained that she could not question the Minister for Home Ownership about the RTA during estimates. She has no idea what the different portfolio responsibilities are, even though she is a former housing minister. She failed to ask me as the housing minister or the CEO of the RTA—we were both there to answer questions. She did not ask us a single question about that issue. The opportunity was there. The member chose not to take it. She decided to play politics instead.

If the member did want to discuss the treatment of renters' bonds, she should explain why the Labor Party made the decision to move those funds from the RTA to Treasury. Labor raided Queensland renters' bonds, and we have had to fix that mess and properly fund the RTA with a Treasury top-up to keep this important organisation running and serving Queensland renters right across our state. That is a record that the Labor Party cannot erase by simply selectively quoting from an annual report.

On social housing—these are numbers that I love to repeat because the contrast could not be clearer—the member for Gaven, the member for Algester and the member for Springwood combined sold nearly 2,000 social homes during their decade of decline. They added, on average, 509 social homes a year across our state. In contrast, in the last financial year, the Crisafulli government delivered 2,244 new social and affordable homes across Queensland. They are providing our most vulnerable Queenslanders in particular somewhere to live. That deserves to be acknowledged, and they deserve to be acknowledged because we are here to serve them. Right now we have 7,018 social and affordable homes under contract or construction across Queensland.

The member for Gaven is entitled to scrutinise our performance, but she should present the full picture instead of trying to scare vulnerable Queenslanders. She should take full responsibility for her record as housing minister and for the record of the Labor government more generally.

We have a strong record of unlocking housing supply and boosting home ownership. We have extended the \$30,000 first home owner grant and doubled our Boost to Buy shared equity scheme to \$330 million, supporting up to 2,000 first home buyers, with half of those places reserved for regional Queenslanders. Boost to Buy helps those Queenslanders who can service a mortgage but who cannot overcome the hurdle to put together their deposit, allowing eligible buyers to purchase with as little as a two per cent deposit.

Helping people buy must go hand in hand with building more homes. Getting together your deposit means not much if there are no homes on the market available for you to purchase. That is why supply, supply, supply is our No. 1 priority. It is so much our No. 1 priority that we repeat it three times! It is a very important priority for us. It is why we are unlocking over 51,000 new homes in three priority development areas alone which will include at least 20,000 homes specifically reserved for first home buyers. That is a \$2.4 billion investment in catalyst infrastructure—roads, water, wastewater projects—to fast-track home ownership opportunities in Southern Thornlands, Waraba and Mount Peter south of Cairns, as well as other new growth areas across our state.

That fund is on top of our Residential Activation Fund, which has already unlocked over 166,000 homes by supporting similar infrastructure to bring developments to life and sites to market. This includes 18,900 homes on the Gold Coast, with a \$146 million investment across multiple projects including in my own community at Parkwood. This is about turning land with housing potential into communities where Queenslanders can actually live.

Through A Place to Call Home, our 20-year housing plan—and I want to acknowledge the member for Everton for laying the foundations of our housing plan prior to the last election—we have committed to delivering a million new homes by 2044, unlocking sites and making it easier to build. Our approach is working. For the fourth quarter in a row we have more homes under construction in Queensland than at any point since data started being recorded. There are 52,500 homes under construction right now.

There is a lot more to do but we are moving in the right direction. This bill supports that work. It makes it clear that eligible participants in Boost to Buy and the Commonwealth's Help to Buy scheme can access the same transfer duty concessions, first home owner grant and land tax home exemptions

as other eligible buyers. It prevents additional transfer duty being imposed when participants buy back the government's equity. Someone taking the next step towards owning their home outright should not be penalised simply because they needed help with that initial deposit.

The bill also addresses technicalities that can unfairly exclude first home buyers from assistance. It expands the vacant land concessions to include land with certain minor, non-habitable structures—an old shed or storage cage—so they do not stand between someone being an eligible buyer and receiving their concession. It clarifies that eligible newly constructed homes sold through certain builders' terms arrangements can qualify for the grant and duty relief.

These changes are all about ensuring assistance turns on what someone is actually purchasing rather than the technical arrangements between a developer and a builder. These are practical changes that remove barriers, support new housing and ultimately help more Queenslanders have a place to call home. I commend the bill to the House.