Speech By

Sandy Bolton

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2026

HOME OWNERSHIP AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Ms BOLTON (Noosa—Ind) (3.31 pm): While this bill is largely technical in nature, behind every amendment are Queenslanders—in this case, first home buyers navigating a complicated pathway to home ownership. The objective of ensuring Queensland's taxation and home owner grant legislation continues to operate as intended is a positive and the bill updates provisions that have become outdated over time, which is important in ensuring legislation remains fit for purpose. It is essential that first home buyers using Queensland's Boost to Buy scheme or the Commonwealth's Help to Buy scheme are not disadvantaged by Queensland taxes, duties and grants. As we are all aware, the dream of home ownership has become a nightmare for young Queenslanders, essential workers and families. Those who have secured a home face the increasing hardships of servicing a mortgage while those who do not have the bank of mum and dad face the impossible task of saving for deposits that continue to grow, despite working hard and earning above-average incomes.

In my electorate, for years entry-level houses were snapped up by investors for short-term accommodation purposes or by those seeking to demolish them to make way for bigger and better houses. This led to a chronic shortage of affordable accommodation to either purchase or rent. It has seen a loss of our essential service workers and long-term much loved volunteers who have had to relocate, creating hardships for our businesses and not-for-profit organisations and clubs. This domino effect has been felt across Queensland and Australia, ripping apart the social fabric, connections and networks essential for wellbeing. Any sensible reform that lessens the burden is welcomed. However, let us be blunt: these types of amendments only assist first home buyers if there is something available in their price range. With a maximum purchase price of $750,000 applicable, I ask: where can you buy a house for that? However, I will move on and go to some positives.

The clarification around the first home vacant land concession to include land with certain existing structures reflects the reality of many properties across Queensland where caravans, tiny homes, sheds or dongas have been constructed legally, and sometimes illegally, as a means to get a roof over one's head. First home owners should not be penalised for purchasing property with those types of structures. Another practical amendment ensures that homes previously sold under particular builder financing arrangements continue to qualify as new homes for the purposes of the first home owner grant. This certainty for purchasers reflects what I believe was always the policy intent. Likewise, extending the vehicle registration duty exemption to current members of the Australian Defence Force is a sensible and equitable amendment that acknowledges their service, which I welcome.

Whilst the bill's technical improvements are welcomed, they do not address the realities, as I have raised many times in this chamber. It is a fact that genuine housing affordability remains the greatest issue across Queensland, including in my own community, for our service workers. They are our nurses, teachers, hospitality workers, police officers and carers. As I said earlier, many have already moved away to regions that have housing within their budgets, leaving our communities without those essential workers. Others sleep in their cars, with nowhere safe to go, and then they go to work each day. Our safe car park at the Salvos has been full since opening. It is full of women aged over 55 who

work in the care industries. As we have requested for five years now, there is a former campground that would be suitable for up to 25 demountables, tiny homes or caravans, but we have had to listen to nonsensical excuses as to why it cannot be used as a safe temporary solution. How does that in any way pass the pub test?

While I acknowledge that $3.4 million has been committed in 2026-27 to deliver housing and homelessness services across the Noosa electorate, the fact remains that selling state land to developers without a genuine affordable housing component will not deliver homes to workers and neither will continuing to tout 'building more and quicker', as people cannot afford million dollar homes to buy or rent. As a society, we are supposed to look after our vulnerable, our elders, our women and our children. The number of those people who are at risk of or are currently experiencing homelessness is a disgraceful reflection on governments of all levels. The lack of secure affordable accommodation is a significant contributor to failing physical and mental health, domestic violence and addiction, yet we continue to use the same responses that, over decades, allowed this housing crisis to develop in the first place.

The lack of substantial action has led to local governments dedicating areas of public land for our homeless, with government responding that we have enough capacity for crisis and temporary housing. Evidently not, if the Wyllie Park situation in Petrie is anything to go by. Sadly—and I have said it before—the words 'housing affordability' have been used inappropriately for so long that the phrase has lost its meaning. Please, can government explain how homes under $700,000 will be available in places where workers are needed? What options will be used to replace the emergency accommodation funding next year? Temporary options, such as relocatable parks, are better than sleeping in a car or a tent.

While we are at it, we need a review of the social housing income threshold, because I talk to many organisations and they tell me that this is a serious issue. You cannot fix something by avoiding it. Shared equity programs, initiatives, barrier removal and building cost reduction through BPIC may assist our housing efforts. However, on their own or combined, they are not the full answer. The challenge remains: how do we achieve genuine—and I say it again, genuine—affordable options while ensuring our communities remain healthy and uncongested for residents to live, work, volunteer and play? This requires collaboration and bipartisan agreements that go beyond election cycles across all levels of government, industry and our communities as no-one can do this alone. The best outcomes are achieved when those affected have genuine opportunities to contribute their knowledge and lived experience and we hear what is constraining what they seek. What is needed are some frank and fearless conversations but, as yet, I do not see that occurring.