

Question on Notice
No. 682
Asked on 26 May 2021

Ms F Simpson asked Premier and Minister for Trade (Hon. A Palaszczuk)—

QUESTION:

With reference to affordability and availability of rental homes, particularly where vacancy rates are less than 1 percent—

Will the Premier (a) advise the government has done to identify and address red tape which is adding time delays and additional costs to the release of more housing in the private rental market; and (b) put a moratorium in place on any new regulation or law which adds to the cost of a new home while the housing shortage in Queensland is so dire?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government recognises the impact of the current market conditions on many people across Queensland. My Government remains committed to working with the development and construction industries, federal and local governments, and other organisations to facilitate pathways to safe, secure and affordable housing for all Queenslanders.

(a) Queensland's strong response to the COVID-19 pandemic has made Queensland an attractive place to call home. Along with a range of other factors this has also increased pressure on the housing market and land supply, particularly in South East Queensland. In April 2021, Queensland's dwelling approvals were 61 per cent higher than April 2020. At the same time, there have been significant supply chain challenges, causing shortages in the availability of trades, skilled labour and building materials.

On 15 June 2021, the Queensland Government released the *Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021–25* under the *Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–27*. The *Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021–25* includes actions to address immediate and longer term housing needs across Queensland, including:

- more than \$1.8 billion to increase the supply of social housing and upgrade the existing social housing property portfolio, including \$502.6 million in capital works and capital grants in 2021–22;
- establishing a \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund, the returns of which will be used to drive new supply and a diverse range of options to support current and future housing needs;
- a commitment to commence 6,365 social dwellings over the next four years. This builds on the 2,480 new dwellings we have either delivered or commenced since we launched the *Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–27*;
- using state planning and economic development tools to deliver social and affordable housing. This includes opening up underutilised government land and ensuring land used for large-scale government projects and residential projects includes social and affordable housing;
- enhancing the suite of products and services to support private rental and home ownership, including improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's access to home ownership opportunities in remote, rural and regional locations;

- delivering rental law reform in Queensland, to improve rental settings, ensuring quality standards and better supports and protections for both renters and lessors; and
- working with regional councils to increase and diversify the supply of housing.

These actions build on existing Queensland Government initiatives to support the release of more housing, including:

- the Build to Rent pilots to deliver discount-to-market affordable rental homes. Two Brisbane-based pilot projects have already been approved and will offer almost 750 rented apartments, with up to 240 of the apartments to be provided at a discounted rent;
- working with local governments to deliver land supply for new housing and zoning that facilitates housing choice to support the State's planning interests in housing supply and diversity and liveable communities;
- declaring Priority Development Areas under the *Economic Development Act 2012* to deliver significant benefits through master planned development by Economic Development Queensland, including providing a range of housing options; and
- establishing the Growth Areas Team in the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning to work with the private sector, utilities and councils to accelerate the supply of land and infrastructure to support future housing needs, including supporting housing choice and affordability in South East Queensland.

(b) The Queensland Government does not consider a regulatory moratorium is justified or would address the problem, given the complex factors and multiple actors influencing housing supply and affordability.

A new national minimum standard for accessible housing to be applied to newly-constructed houses is proposed for inclusion in the National Construction Code 2022. This new minimum standard may add a comparatively small additional cost to the construction of new housing. However, it is considered critical to ensure safe, secure and liveable housing especially for seniors, with significant growth expected in the number of Australians remaining in their homes as they age.

The Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety found that governments, as a matter of priority, should work together to increase accessible housing, including private rental housing and social and affordable housing, for the ageing population.

The National Construction Code 2022 is not due to commence until 1 September 2022 and Building Ministers across Australia have agreed to consult with industry on transition strategies and implementation timeframes for how best to introduce these reforms.