

Queensland Parliament Hansard Green

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SUBJECT: Housing Affordability

MEMBER: Ms BOLTON

### Housing Affordability



**Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (7.30 pm): Housing affordability, housing shortage, rental stress, mortgage stress and homelessness—we speak of these as if they are a normal part of our existence portrayed through statistics, graphs and debate. Let us bring the discussion back to what those issues really are. They are symptoms of a system that has failed in its most basic commitment to our communities. These issues are stressful, emotive and a life-altering reality faced by thousands of Queenslanders every day.

We have yet to fully comprehend the total costs financially, emotionally and physically this toll takes on individuals, our communities and our government. However, it is becoming increasingly evident that these stresses contribute to a multitude of social, economic and environmental impacts including domestic violence, depression and mental illness. While acknowledging that the current 10-year Queensland housing strategy has commendable elements with commitments to investing in Queensland with a focus on vulnerable groups, there is concern that this will not alleviate the crisis in many communities in housing our low income workers. My electorate of Noosa faces significant challenges in this arena.

The federal government data from the Smarter Cities plan compares data from the Sunshine Coast and Noosa with the 21 other areas of highest population in Australia. This data reflects the Noosa reality—median house prices over nine times the average household income level and substantially higher than Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. We have the highest dwelling price to income ratio of all the areas. We also have above average mortgage and rental stress and a below average proportion of houses in the rental market—the number of dwelling units per 100,000 population in the public and community housing sector is almost half of the average of all other city areas. This data shows a long standing chronic underinvestment in community housing and a failure of housing policy in my constituency. This crisis in the housing market has been brought about by a perfect storm of prevailing conditions, according to the Grattan Institute report titled, 'Housing Affordability! Reimagining the Australian Dream.'

There are a number of solutions that could be supported by government. Community housing providers manage private and social housing in a very effective way. Moreover, the not-for-profit sector is eligible for significant federal funding and assistance and has the capacity to partner in shared equity models; with community banks and social enterprise to deliver ongoing affordability in home ownership and rentals in our communities. Both the private and community sectors also have a range of innovative concepts, including: the reconfiguration of large houses into flatettes, dual key options and integrated developments based on our existing over-55s village models. Action is needed now in the Noosa electorate and elsewhere in Queensland. Innovative and creative concepts combined with the bigger role for community housing providers can assist in providing much-needed solutions in the short, medium and long-term.