

~~diversion assessment program or a drug diversion program is replaced with the requirement to participate in the respective program. The effect of these amendments will enable a person to use electronic means to participate in and complete the required programs.~~

~~I now turn to the other unrelated criminal law amendments in the bill. The bill will also amend the Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986, which provides the framework to allow persons convicted of certain criminal offences to lawfully deny or not be required to disclose those convictions after a specific rehabilitation period has passed. The proposed amendment will clarify that a conviction involving a head sentence of more than thirty months imprisonment can never be a spent conviction and must, therefore, be disclosed. This amendment is a direct response to the concerns raised in the recent Court of Appeal decision of Dupois v Queensland Television Ltd & Ors.~~

~~The bill also amends the Drugs Misuse Act to recast the definition of dangerous drug to better clarify and prescribe the substances intended to be captured under the extended definition of dangerous drug. This will be achieved by placing established scientific parameters around what substances are captured within the extended definition. The bill amends section 4(c) of the Drugs Misuse Act to omit the existing extended definition of dangerous drug and to replace it with the concept of a drug analogue, which provides a more objective and scientific approach to defining substances to be captured under the legislation. This proposed amendment responds appropriately to the recent District Court decision of R v Champion and will also implement outstanding recommendation 3.2 of the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry Report, which recommended that the government review the efficacy of the extended definition of dangerous drug under the Drugs Misuse Act in facilitating prosecutions.~~

~~Finally, consistent with the government's ongoing commitment to ensuring the highest degree of protection for victims of domestic and family violence, the bill makes an amendment to the Evidence Act 1977 to provide that the alleged victims of the offence of choking, suffocation or strangulation in a domestic setting under section 315A of the Criminal Code will be treated as protected witnesses for purposes of Part 2, Division 6 of the act. This will ensure that an unrepresented accused is prohibited from personally cross-examining the victim of the choking offence. I commend the bill to the House.~~

~~First Reading~~

~~Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe ALP) (Attorney General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (3.18 pm): I move~~

~~That the bill be now read a first time.~~

~~Question put That the bill be now read a first time.~~

~~Motion agreed to.~~

~~Bill read a first time.~~

~~Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee~~

~~Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.~~

~~Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date~~

~~Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe ALP) (Attorney General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (3.18 pm), by leave, without notice: I move~~

~~That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Penalties and Sentences (Drug and Alcohol Treatment Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 28 September 2017.~~


~~Question put That the motion be agreed to.~~

~~Motion agreed to. >~~

026

<HOUSING LEGISLATION (BUILDING BETTER FUTURES) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport) (3.19 pm<): I present a bill for an act to amend the Building Act 1975, the Housing Act 2003, >the Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003, the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act

2002, the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 and the Retirement Villages Act 1999 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Public Works and Utilities Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Housing Legislation (Building Better Futures) Amendment Bill 2017.

Tabled paper: Housing Legislation (Building Better Futures) Amendment Bill 2017, explanatory notes.

I am pleased to rise in this place today to introduce the Housing Legislation (Building Better Futures) Amendment Bill 2017. On 12 June 2017 the Palaszczuk government released its comprehensive 10-year Queensland Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy is a landmark 10-year plan for the investment of \$1.8 billion in new construction and housing services in this state. It is a strategy I am extremely proud to have delivered for the people of Queensland. Access to safe, secure and affordable housing is the foundation on which we build connected communities. With this bill today we are proposing a number of legislative reforms to improve housing outcomes for Queenslanders, especially our seniors.

About 25,000 Queenslanders, mainly seniors, are living in manufactured homes in 182 residential parks. More than 7,000 Queenslanders, many of whom are particularly vulnerable, are living in 266 residential services, such as boarding houses and supported accommodation. Approximately 42,000 older Queenslanders are living in 318 retirement villages. More than 628,000 Queenslanders—that is about 35.6 per cent of the population of this state—are living in private rental accommodation.

It is important that we have robust legislative frameworks that meet the needs of Queenslanders who live in residential services, in manufactured homes or retirement villages or who rent on the private rental market. In that context, I am pleased to introduce the Housing Legislation (Building Better Futures) Amendment Bill 2017.

These are historic reforms which will introduce a new era of fairness for residents of retirement villages, manufactured homes and residential services. Members of this place were shocked to see the stories of exploitation in the retirement village sector during the recent *Four Corners* report. Many of the issues raised in that program are similar to the issues that have been raised with me during consultation on the Queensland Housing Strategy. This bill will introduce a regime of fairness to the retirement living sector in Queensland, making Queensland the national leader in consumer protection for older Australians.

The bill will amend the Housing Act 2003, the Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003, the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002, the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 and the Retirement Villages Act 1999. The bill will also amend the Retirement Villages Act 1999 and the Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003 to increase transparency, improve precontractual disclosure processes and introduce new behaviour standards to make it easier to address undesirable behaviour in residential parks and retirement villages. A greater focus on dispute resolution is also included to provide the opportunity for issues to be resolved without having to go into the formal tribunal system.

Reforms to Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003 also include limitations on rental increases, prohibiting additional fees around utilities and meter readings and ensuring emergency services and health workers have access to residential parks. Other proposed amendments to the Retirement Villages Act 1999 will increase transparency in the relationships between operators and residents, and provide greater security to residents, balanced against ongoing industry viability. Greater financial transparency will be required about retirement village funds, budgets and financial statements, and will address resident and consumer advocate concerns about fees and contracts. Residents will also have greater protections around resales and exit entitlements or when there is a change in village operations. A regulation may also impose a requirement about the provision of equipment in a retirement village for public safety.

Amendments to the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2002 will also ensure the regulatory framework protects residents, promotes fair trading practice and encourages the growth and viability of Queensland's residential services industry, which includes boarding houses, some aged rental accommodation and services that provide personal care. The health and safety of these residents has been the driver for these changes.

Our proposed changes are intended to: raise compliance with accreditation standards and registration requirements, ensure that operators are suitable persons and require services to have a fire safety management plan; allow publication of the registered addresses of accredited services to be avoided in cases where safety concerns may arise; and clarify some current uncontentious exemptions from registration requirements. These necessary safety and security amendments will address

ambiguity and uncertainty. These amendments will also better ensure that services accommodating women and children escaping domestic and family violence will not have that address included on the publicly searchable register of residential services. Other amendments will provide greater clarity on regulatory requirements to help service providers understand their rights and obligations.

The Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 amendment will enable minimum housing standards to be prescribed for rental accommodation in Queensland. This delivers on the government's election commitment to ensure rental premises are safe, secure and fit for purpose. It is a concern that properties can be rented where amenities do not work, and if tenants speak up they have no guarantee that the landlord will not end the tenancy at the end of the lease. I am concerned that this creates a system where vulnerable Queenslanders can be forced to live in homes where the basic services and amenities do not work and they have little recourse or, alternatively, are too afraid to speak up about it. Therefore, the minimum housing standards will enhance the safety and dignity of Queenslanders who rent their home and ensure any vulnerable community members are supported to sustain their tenancy.

The amendments will provide a head of power for a regulation to prescribe minimum housing standards. Further public consultation will be undertaken about how and what these standards may look like and how they will be enforced, as part of the drafting of any of the relevant amendments to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Regulation 2009. Later this year, I intend to consult more widely about other ways the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 can be amended to make it more contemporary.

The bill also makes clarifying amendments to the definition of 'relevant property' under the Housing Act 2003. This amendment is necessary to ensure that the state's interest in community housing is protected during the transition to the National Regulatory System for Community Housing.

This bill is the result of very detailed consultation. I would like to thank all community groups and organisations and Queenslanders who had their say. The draft bill was circulated for consultation to my Ministerial Housing Council members and additional key stakeholders with an interest in residential parks, residential tenancies, residential services and retirement villages. Over 50 per cent of the items raised in feedback on the retirement village laws have been incorporated into this legislation, with my department continuing to progress a number of other items through their ongoing work.

The amendments in this bill begin the process of legislative reform which will create a better housing future for all Queenslanders, whether renters, owners, retirees or the most vulnerable in our community. Through these amendments we are continuing to deliver a safer, more secure and more affordable housing future for Queenslanders. That is the Palaszczuk government's commitment and that is what we are delivering. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport) (3.28 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Public Works and Utilities Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Public Works and Utilities Committee.

~~Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date~~

~~**Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Sport) (3.28 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—~~

~~That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Public Works and Utilities Committee report to the House on the Housing Legislation (Building Better Futures) Amendment Bill by 28 September.~~

~~Question put—That the motion be agreed to.~~

~~Motion agreed to. →~~