



# WOULD A VACANCY LEVY HELP EASE THE HOUSING CRISIS?

Rental costs and housing prices in Brisbane are out of control. Right now, you need a six-figure income just to afford the *median* rent without falling into housing stress. The idea of buying a home — something that was once achievable for many — now feels like a pipe dream, increasingly out of reach for everyday people.

At the same time, **local business owners are also feeling the squeeze**. High commercial rents are making it harder to keep doors open or start new ventures.

This drives up the cost of goods and services, while stifling creativity and innovation in our local economy.

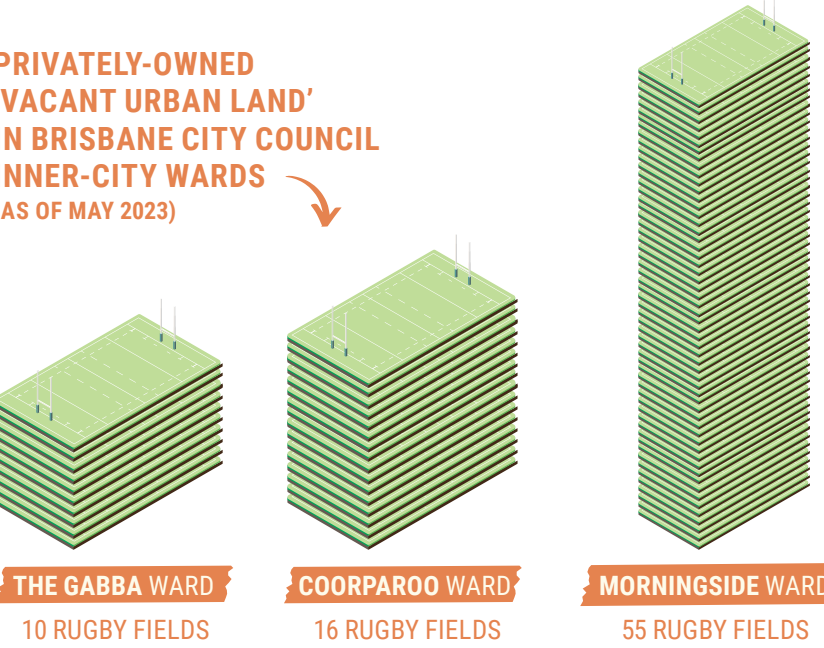
## WHAT IS LAND BANKING?

Land banking is when developers or investors buy property and leave the land or building vacant, waiting for the value to rise so they can sell it for profit — **treating homes and land as a speculative commodity instead of a community resource**.

It's a form of hoarding that delays development, artificially restricts the supply of new housing, worsens inequality, and ultimately drives up housing costs and rents for everyone.

**A vacancy levy would make land banking a bad financial decision.**

**PRIVATELY-OWNED 'VACANT URBAN LAND' IN BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL INNER-CITY WARDS (AS OF MAY 2023)**



## DID YOU KNOW?

I've been calling on Council to crackdown on rental homes being converted into AirBNBs. Last year the Lord Mayor promised to regulate AirBNBs with a new local law, but has failed to deliver.

Can you send the Lord Mayor an email to help pressure him to live up to his word?



# HAVE VACANCY LEVIES BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN OTHER CITIES AROUND THE WORLD?

## VANCOUVER, CANADA



Vancouver introduced a speculation and vacancy tax (SVT) on empty homes in 2018. In the first three years **over 20,000 properties were returned to the rental market or listed for sale**.

The SVT **generated \$230 million revenue** during the same period which was reinvested into affordable housing projects.

The policy has been recognized as a successful model for addressing housing affordability issues.

## IRELAND



Ireland introduced a vacant homes tax (VHT) in late 2022 which applies to residential properties used as dwellings for less than 20 days in a year.

In the first year of operation, \$4.1 million was raised from almost 4000 properties. **The aim of the VHT is not to raise revenue, but to encourage investors to make properties available to be lived in.**

For the first year, the VHT is set at 300% of the standard property tax, increasing to 500% and then 700% in the second and subsequent years.

## PARIS, FRANCE



In 1999, France introduced a tax on vacant housing (TLV) in certain urban areas with populations over 200,000.

The TLV resulted in a **13% decrease in vacancy rates between 1997 and 2001**. From 2023 the VLT is 17% of the cadastral rental value in the first year and 34% each subsequent year.

The goal is to discourage property speculation and encourage owners to rent out empty homes, thereby increasing the availability of housing for residents.

## MELBOURNE, AUST



A Vacant Residential Land Tax (VRLT) was implemented within Melbourne in 2018, targeting unoccupied residential properties.

In 2023, the VRLT **collected \$11.3 million from 1013 properties**. In 2025 the VRLT was expanded to cover Victoria and from 2026 will also apply to undeveloped land in Melbourne.

While effective in bringing some properties back into use, the tax has faced implementation challenges — with data suggesting ~95% of vacant homes have avoided the tax.



These examples **demonstrate that vacancy levies can effectively reduce property vacancies**, increase housing availability, and generate funds for community development.

Implementing such a policy in Brisbane could help **address the city's housing crisis** by encouraging the utilisation of empty properties and providing resources for affordable housing initiatives.



## STAY CONNECTED

Please sign up for our monthly email newsletters to stay in touch!



TRINAMASSEY.COM/UPDATES

## GET IN TOUCH!

2/63 Annerley Road, Woolloongabba  
Monday – Friday, 9am – 4:30pm  
thegabba.ward@bcc.qld.gov.au (07) 3403 2165  
trinamassey.com trinamasseygabba crtrinamassey



WINTER 2025 ❄️

# TRINA MASSEY COUNCILLOR FOR THE GABBA WARD



Dear Neighbours

**As we move into the second half of the year, it's clear that we're living through some incredibly uncertain times.** Brisbane narrowly missed the worst of an ex-cyclone, while western Queensland has been devastated by historic flooding — stark reminders of how quickly and intensely climate change is impacting our communities.

At the same time, the cost of living — especially when it comes to groceries, rent, and housing — just keeps climbing. It's hitting all of us hard, and for many in our community, it's reaching a breaking point. **Wages aren't keeping up, and everyday essentials are becoming less affordable by the week.**

On top of that, global instability — like Trump's renewed tariff threats—continues to shake the economy, adding even more uncertainty to an already difficult time.

I know many of us are feeling the weight of it all. I certainly am. With governments siding with billionaires and big corporations instead of everyday people, in these moments it's **our connections with each other — our neighbours, our friends, our grassroots networks — that become the strongest source of support and strength.**

Whether it's planting veggies with neighbours at the community garden, volunteering as part of a local organisation, sharing a meal or just checking in on someone who needs it — these everyday acts of care are more than just comforting. They're acts of collective resilience. **And in times like these, resilience is resistance.**

Despite the challenges, I'm excited to share what I've been working on in Council — because hope is something we act on. There's real power in our community, and together, we can continue to push for the kind of neighbourhoods we all deserve.

**We've been through tough times before — and we got through them by sticking together. We'll do it again.**

Together in hope and action,

Trina Massey  
COUNCILLOR FOR THE GABBA WARD



## COMMUNITY UPDATES

Sign the petition calling on Brisbane City Council to urgently reopen safe access for pedestrians and cyclists on the Story Bridge by reallocating one lane with protective barriers.



I've secured funding to paint a mural on the People's Park Kiosk. Expressions of interest are now open.

First Nations artists in particular are encouraged to apply.



I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land which we live and work on, the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples. Sovereignty was never ceded.





# DELIVERING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

In my last newsletter, I spoke about how the Lord Mayor’s financial mismanagement has left Brisbane City Council in a dire financial position. Despite these challenges, I’ve continued to work hard to deliver real outcomes for our community — focusing on the things that matter most to all of us. Below are some of the key wins and initiatives from my first two years in Council.

## A NEW DOG PARK ON RIVERSIDE DRIVE

Secured Council support for a new dog park near Beesley St – to replace the one permanently closed after the 2022 floods. Construction is expected to occur over the 2025/26 financial year.

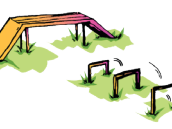


## GABBA WARD SANDBAG DEPOT

Secured a temporary sandbag depot within Davies Park in the lead up to Ex-Cyclone Alfred. After decades of resistance within Council, this sets a precedent for future disaster prep.

## EXPAND AND UPGRADE THE ORLEIGH PARK DOG PARK

Work is underway to create separate large and small dog areas, new seating, a new shelter, terracing to reduce erosion, turf rehabilitation, dog agility zone, and surrounding landscaping.



Learn more about the proposal at one of my **pop up offices**:

### → DAVIES PARK

**Sunday 29 June** 9am to 11am

**Tuesday 29 July** 4pm to 5:30pm

### → RIVERSIDE DRIVE (NEAR BEESLEY ST)

**Monday 30 June** 3:45pm to 5:15pm

**Thursday 31 July** 4pm to 5:30pm

## PEDESTRIAN CROSSING UPGRADES

With the current administration failing to invest in pedestrian safety, I’ve used my modest Suburban Enhancement Fund to move forward on key projects. Pedestrian crossing designs are currently underway for the following locations:

- **Nile St, Woolloongabba** (intersection with Logan Rd)
- **Main St, Kangaroo Point** (north of Baidon St)
- **Dornoch Tce, Highgate Hill** (between Boundary St Bridge & Colton St)
- **Montague Rd, West End** (near Donkin St)

Sign up to my email newsletters to get notifications about community consultation.



## KANGAROO POINT GREEN BRIDGE

Continued the work started by former Cr Jonno Sriranganathan to deliver a green bridge connecting Kangaroo Point to the City.

## HAMPSTEAD ROAD GREENING

Produced a concept design for a green boulevard with protected bike lanes. Consultation open now:



## HOUSING CRISIS ROUND TABLES

For the past two years I have been organising housing crisis round tables to bring together grassroots community groups, on-the-ground service providers, and local and state government agencies.

These meetings have built connections and improved communication between stakeholders – leading to a holistic and more compassionate response to the increase in people forced to sleep rough.



## ACTIVE TRANSPORT UPGRADES FOR ANNERLEY ROAD

Supported the community campaign to secure funding to design protected bike lanes for Annerley Road (between Gladstone Road and Ipswich Road) – including a redesign of the Noble Street/Cornwall Street intersection.

Concept design expected to be released early to mid-2026.

## SAVED EAST BRISBANE STATE SCHOOL & RAYMOND PARK

From being destroyed as part of the proposal to demolish and rebuild the Gabba Stadium.

Huge thanks to the thousands of residents who participated in the campaign – special mention to Rethink the Gabba, Friends of Raymond Park, and East Brisbane SS P&C!

This was a team effort and we wouldn’t have won without your hard work.



## NEW BIKE PARKING STATIONS

Delivered a new 32 pax bike parking station in Davies Park – plus new trees and native landscaping.

I’ve funded new bike parking across the ward, see the list of proposed locations and suggest new ones here:

[TRINAMASSEY.COM/BIKE\\_PARKING](https://trinamassey.com/bike_parking)



## EXPANDED THE DAVIES PARK SKATE PARK

And installed solar lighting to support night-time use.



## HUMANS OF BRISBANE HUDA’S STORY

My mother fled Khartoum, Sudan, when I was five years old, carrying a suitcase filled with memories of home, culture, language, and hope — hope that she could give me a better life.

We lived in Cairo, Egypt, for five years — a story that today would be used to encourage donations for African children. We experienced poverty, displacement, food insecurity, abuse, and traumas that survivors often refuse to revisit. My mother worked tirelessly to hide how much we were struggling. For five years in Egypt, I couldn’t go to school or live like a normal child. Nothing is more dehumanising than having to fight for your basic human rights like they are privileges, while everyone else simply has them.

The refugee story is often misrepresented. We don’t seek refuge in Australia to steal; we seek it to regain our humanity — to have the right to work, to eat, to study, to build. We fight to be human while others simply are. To hate a group of people for trying to be human is one of the most inhuman things one can do.

No one works harder than the poor. No one understands the value of money more than those who fight for scraps of a dollar. My mother wanted to give us a chance — a chance to work, to build, to create a reality that was never possible for us before.

## It’s a proxy war, not a civil war

In April 2023, Sudan was plunged into chaos when a war erupted between the Sudanese army and paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The UN says it is “one of the worst humanitarian crises of the 21st century”: nearly 13 million people have been displaced, 30.4 million need humanitarian aid, and 24 million are experiencing acute food insecurity.

Incorrectly labelled a “civil war” by the media, the conflict is more accurately described as a proxy war; the fighting is being fueled by external powers to allow for the continuous robbery of Sudan’s natural resources such as gold and oil. Simplifying it to just a power struggle between Sudanese leaders is an anti-Black narrative that ignores the targeting of Sudan’s people and land.

The RSF has used the conflict as cover to continue waging genocide against the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa peoples of the Darfur region. A recent massacre of over 500 civilians in a Darfur displacement camp was labelled a “military zone” to justify attacks — echoing tactics used by the Israeli state to whitewash killing civilians.

This is an invitation to look deeper — to understand Sudan beyond headlines and stand against the erasure of its people’s suffering.

- Words by Huda the Goddess, Brisbane resident



PHOTO: ELENA ADENIYI / UNHCR