

ROUNDTABLE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

51. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Housing:

Could the minister please outline some of the significant issues raised at his Roundtable on Affordable Housing meeting, which brings together government, industry and community sectors to develop ideas to address the affordable housing challenge?

Mr W.R. MARMION replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield for a very good question. One of the key aspects of our strategy to make housing more affordable is to get feedback from industry. One of the mechanisms I use is the Roundtable on Affordable Housing. We have had three meetings. Previous housing ministers have used the same vehicle. At the last meeting we focused on the cost and complexity of planning and building approvals processes. Whilst there is no silver bullet, a number of issues were raised. They relate mainly to disparity between local councils in relation to planning and building requirements, developer contributions and also the decision-making process itself. There are lots of inconsistencies that add to the cost such as time delays and poor development decisions, and obviously that increases the cost of housing, making it less affordable. It is a fairly important topic to address at the roundtable.

Some of the specific examples raised by the people who attended, who I will mention shortly, related to the structure plans. Some councils require very detailed structure plans, which go beyond the guidelines of the state government's structure plans. There is a bit of disparity between the councils on structure plans. That is even before there is approval for a development. Another example raised was the aesthetic changes to projects that already meet the planning and building guidelines. Small changes are made by some councils. One example I will give is changing the roof pitch and adding coloured panels to a complex added \$6 000 to the cost of each of the apartments. At the lower end of the market, that is a significant amount of money for an apartment. Another example raised by some of the developers at this meeting was the different garage guttering types. That is not really a big issue but councils seem to think it is a big issue. There is also the issue of kitchen exhaust fans and whether they can be internally circulated or discharged externally. The way forward is to get some reform around local government. I am pleased to see that my colleague the Minister for Local Government is addressing some of those issues. That is very good.

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Willagee, I call you to order for the first time. Please calm down. The air conditioning is coming back on.

Mr W.R. MARMION: I look forward to that.

In conclusion, the Liberal–National government is listening to the feedback it is getting from industry. We are addressing some of the approvals process concerns and the Minister for Local Government will be dealing with a lot of those that were raised at the meeting. I wish to thank those people from industry, including Anglicare WA, the Housing Industry Association, the Western Australian Local Government Association, the Property Council of Australia, the Urban Development Institute of Australia and the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia, for their contributions to the roundtable.