

SOCIAL HOUSING ECONOMIC PACKAGE — REGIONS

655. Ms J. FARRER to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's \$5.5 billion recovery plan that includes a massive investment in supporting Western Australia's building and construction sector. Can the minister update the house on how this government's \$319 million social housing economic recovery package is providing unprecedented support for regional jobs and regional businesses?

Mr P.C. TINLEY replied:

I thank the member for Kimberley for the question and her enduring commitment to improving social housing throughout the Kimberley.

The McGowan government came to government with the ambition of ensuring that it delivers across the economic spectrum, including the delivery of social housing. Since then, we have put over \$500 million of extra spending into social housing to improve not only the stock, but also its availability to the most vulnerable people in our community. The latest iteration of that, members might recall, was a \$319 million social housing economic recovery package—or SHERP as they call it. On top of that, we attended to issues in relation to affordable housing, particularly with Keystart. We put nearly \$1 billion additional lending into the Keystart loan book, taking it to about \$5.2 billion worth of lending available to Western Australians seeking home ownership with a two per cent deposit.

The \$319 million social housing program, members might recall, was to refurbish 1 500 homes, the vast majority of which were at the end of their economic life and were going to be disposed of. In effect, they will be turned around, and we will get another 20-plus years out of those dwellings. We will also deliver 250 new dwellings for government housing and on top of that invest in maintenance in 3 800 other government dwellings. As I said previously, I will be reporting on this consistently and continually to the house to ensure that members understand that at an electorate-by-electorate level, this is having an impact on jobs in their communities. I am proud to say that so far 100 per cent of the work has been awarded to local businesses. At the moment, as the program gathers steam, \$800 000 worth of contracts, particularly maintenance contracts, have been rolled out to businesses across Western Australia. Regional Western Australia has been a significant beneficiary from what would seem a modest investment but actually means jobs in those communities. I will give some examples. The member for Kalgoorlie might like to know that Bright Edge Painting in Kalgoorlie has received one of those contracts. The member for Kimberley would like to know that a \$47 000 contract went to Boab Fencing in Broome, which is a business that has never done work with the Department of Communities before. Of the 21 businesses that are receiving this \$800 000, seven have never before done work with the Department of Communities; they have gained valuable experience tendering to government. It is very well received and appreciated. The member might like to know that S&N Concreting and Constructions in Mullewa received a \$70 000 contract for support to community housing up there. The Leader of the Nationals WA might like to know that Keysite Contracting in Merredin also received a contract. These are jobs at the local level, town by town, electorate by electorate, right across Western Australia as we seek to deliver the sorts of opportunities and packages that this government said it would when it produced a \$5.5 billion recovery package. It is about jobs and delivering for all Western Australians, and we are doing it in spades.