

HOUSING — AVAILABILITY

177. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Ten groups form the Housing Emergency Response Group. Why has the Premier failed to respond to a letter dated 6 May sent to him by this group, calling for immediate action and calling the situation we are faced with a crisis; and, when will the government act?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I am unaware of a letter, but I will outline the situation to the Leader of the Opposition again. Some of those groups I have met and seen in the last little while. In any event, I outlined the Common Ground facilities. Obviously, we have set aside support for two of those facilities to be constructed—one in the city and one in Mandurah. There is money for a 100-bed crisis and transitional accommodation facility that the Minister for Housing and Minister for Community Services are working on, and then there is the \$100 million of services that we provide each and every year for homelessness services across the state. That is all ongoing. That is what we are doing. But, as I said —

Ms M.J. Davies: This group said it's not enough, Premier.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will repeat it to the Leader of the Opposition. Did the Leader of the Opposition predict the pandemic and that tens of thousands of Australians would return home? Did she know that was going to happen? Tens of thousands, in fact, hundreds of thousands of people are coming home and not going back overseas. A lot of Australians have lived overseas for decades. They are coming home with no intention of going back overseas because Australia, and particularly Western Australia, is the best and safest place in the world. They are deciding to stay here and they want accommodation, so they are occupying rentals or buying homes. One of the other things we did—I will outline it again—was to work with the companies to close down interstate FIFO. What has that done? It has meant that all those people who work in those industries, particularly mining, have moved to Western Australia, often with their extended family, and are occupying properties here. Is that a bad thing? That is actually a good thing. That is one of the good things that we did last year that will strengthen Western Australia over time.

Mr R.S. Love: It has consequences.

Mr M. McGOWAN: As the member for Moore said, it has consequences. One of the consequences is that it is great for the Western Australian economy. The member may not like it. The tone of the member for Moore's commentary is that he prefers interstate FIFO. That is the tone of his commentary. Obviously, we do not, so we have a different point of view to the Nationals WA. We want these people to come and live here and we are making sure more accommodation and more housing is being built to ensure that they can be accommodated in the long term.