

SOCIAL HOUSING — KIMBERLEY

86. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to a meeting on Thursday, 3 February, with the Kimberley Regional Group, which comprises the Shires of Broome, Wyndham–East Kimberley, Halls Creek and Derby–West Kimberley, and reports that the minister indicated that any construction of much-needed social housing would wait until after the current critical skills shortage had passed.

- (1) Of the 3 300 houses the minister has announced, how many have been allocated to the Kimberley?
- (2) What is the minister’s solution to deal with the crisis in the Kimberley right now, given that overcrowded houses are contributing to the crime issue facing these communities?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I want to thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) I am disappointed and saddened by the Kimberley Regional Group’s misrepresentation of this matter. I want to be very clear. I had a 30-minute meeting—everyone in this chamber knows that I am highly accessible and responsive to local governments across Western Australia—which turned into about one hour and 15 minutes. At the time, we talked about the current housing market. I have already been on the public record about this: we face a heated construction market and we face challenges, but we are still doing everything we can to deliver and accelerate social housing while also having a \$522 million social housing fund for a pipeline of work once the boom finishes.

It is incorrect to say that social housing in the Kimberley is on hold. I want to be very clear: currently, there are nearly 40 new social homes under construction or contracted for delivery in the Kimberley. I have also worked with the Shire of Derby–West Kimberley to use 15 vacant Government Regional Officers’ Housing homes to not only convert to social housing, but also provide accommodation for the council and other staff. We have provided nearly \$3.2 million worth of grants to the Kimberley community housing organisation, and, of course, we have the \$200 million north-west Aboriginal housing fund, of which we have invested \$25 million into the East Kimberley transitional housing program. We had a \$20 000 building bonus grant, which has seen a 195 per cent increase in the number of homes approved last year.

We understand this: it is about not only building social homes, but also creating land supply. As part of our \$116 million Regional Land Booster program, we have provided funding for the Kimberley to release 40 lots, of which the majority are in Broome. I want to be very clear: we are investing in social housing right now. We are doing everything we can through spot purchasing, using timber frames and modular homes, and converting existing affordable product stock that would otherwise be sold to the market. We also have \$522 million set aside so that when the market recedes, we have a pipeline of work.

That was the discussion. I am deeply disappointed that members of that group have misrepresented that detailed conversation.