

**50 LIVES 50 HOMES PROJECT**

*Statement by Minister for Community Services*

**MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services)** [9.16 am]: I rise today to speak about the 50 Lives 50 Homes project, which is run by Ruah Community Services and was recently evaluated by the University of Western Australia's Centre for Social Impact. I spoke about homelessness here only recently, but it is worth calling to mind the scale of the issue. On census night in 2016, it was estimated that over 9 000 people were experiencing homelessness in Western Australia; 1 083 of those were sleeping rough. The 50 Lives 50 Homes project is a housing first—collective impact project that houses people and then provides wraparound support based on their needs. The project is centred around people experiencing long-term homelessness in and around the Perth CBD. Since it commenced in 2015, the project has housed 147 people in 140 properties. Most importantly, the rate of retention is 88 per cent.

The Centre for Social Impact looked at additional data to determine the effectiveness of the project. Some of the key learnings include that, among those housed for at least six months, there was a 24 per cent drop in the number of people presenting to an emergency department, a 28 per cent reduction in the number of people admitted as inpatients and a 45 per cent reduction in offences committed, particularly drug offences, which dropped by 80 per cent. The reduction in the number of inpatients and presentations to emergency departments alone represent a reduction of \$5 000 in hospital costs per person. The 50 Lives 50 Homes project is to be applauded for making a clear difference to some of our most vulnerable Western Australians. As I outlined recently, I have asked the Department of Communities to commence developing a 10-year homelessness strategy, with consultations taking place across the state. I encourage Western Australians to get involved, because I am confident that if we work together with a clear strategy in place, we will have a significant impact on finally ending homelessness.