

SENIORS RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

**784. Dr G.G. JACOBS to the Minister for Seniors and Volunteering:**

I acknowledge the political and legal students from Penrhos College in the public gallery.

I refer to our ageing population and the important contribution that seniors make to our society and to the fact that this is Seniors' Week.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** You are a great advertisement for active ageing.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** I will take the minister for a run around the bridges any time!

Several members interjected.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** We will see how she goes then - but I will not be going through any tunnels, that is for sure.

- (1) Is the minister aware that the number of seniors waiting for public rental housing has increased by 13.4 per cent since 2001-02 to 2 672 people?
- (2) Given this increase and our ageing population, can the minister please explain why the number of building commencements for seniors rental accommodation has fallen by 40 per cent over the same period?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:**

- (1)-(2) I thank the member for his question. I would not take him up on running around Kings Park because he would defeat me! The member has asked a question that relates to housing and of course to get a response concerning the statistics it would be more appropriately directed to the Minister for Housing and Works. However, in answer to his question generally, seniors in Western Australia have been, and continue to be, a major priority for this government. This government provides a range of concessions and supports for seniors in Western Australia - up to \$1 500 worth of support, which includes rebates, subsidies etc that were introduced some 20 years ago by Hon Kay Hallahan, a minister in a Labor government - an Australian first - and a person of whom this party is very proud. Seniors in Western Australia acknowledge the contribution and the wonderful support that this government has continued to provide them. Not only in this state but also across Australia there is an increasing change in our demographics. As a result, over the next 20 years increasing numbers of people will be over the age of 60. I am certain that the Minister for Housing and Works and, indeed, this government are very aware of the need to ensure that the interests of those vulnerable people who are seniors are provided with appropriate and effective housing. However, we must understand that the Australian government has a very important role to play in housing and aged care. It is a pity that the Australian government does not share the passion for seniors that the government of Western Australia has.