

HOUSING — SCARBOROUGH

Grievance

MRS.N. AUBREY (Scarborough) [9.37 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Planning. I want to thank the minister for taking my grievance today and for his hard work to deliver more housing for Western Australians, especially vulnerable Western Australians.

I bring forth this grievance as one of the youngest members in this house and as a proud Scarborough local. I know firsthand the challenges experienced by renters in this state. I am a renter, and although I acknowledge others in my community are doing it tough, I understand the daily challenges that people face when renting. I also know the challenges of millennials like me who are looking to buy and set down roots in communities they have chosen to live or grown up in. To do this, we need more housing diversity, including housing in well-connected locations, close to amenity and transport.

An article published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* reads —

Almost three-quarters of young Australians believe they will never be able to buy a home, as confidence in the housing market has flatlined ...

Further, an exclusive survey showed that a majority of people believe that the Australian dream is unreachable for the young and that state and federal governments need to launch radical interventions in the housing market to make home ownership affordable again. When respondents were asked why they were renting a house, 49 per cent of them said that they had been priced out of the market. I want to congratulate the minister on the recent announcement that interest rates in the Keystart home loans program would be lowered. The reduction will assist many young Western Australians like me to get into their first home, and it will also assist the cost-of-living challenges of those who already have a Keystart home loan.

As an electrician who has worked in the construction industry, I understand how the challenges in that industry are constraining the delivery of much-needed housing in Western Australia, and how this is a highly complex issue that the state government cannot address alone.

Despite the difficulties, the fact that in this term of government almost 1 500 public houses have been delivered, with around 1 000 more under contract or construction, shows the minister's commitment to delivering on the \$2.6 billion investment into Western Australia's public housing pipeline, and gives hope to the many people on the public housing waiting list.

As a Scarborough local, I have been disheartened to see many in the Scarborough community leave it due to an inability to access housing. Scarborough is Perth's premier beachside destination. It is a vibrant and active community, one that many people want to live in. Although many communities are bogged down and divided over their path forward, Scarborough is surging forward and is united in its drive to do things right. We aim to be a beachside community that can grow to meet its potential as a tourism, arts and culture, sport and recreation and entertainment precinct that puts Perth's best foot forward.

Scarborough put this state's best foot forward to the world when it hosted the FIFA Women's World Cup Unity Pitch for a week in the Scarborough Amphitheatre earlier this year. I take this moment to quickly acknowledge and congratulate the Matildas on their efforts this year. They have made our nation proud despite the result.

We have also hosted significant events such as the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, or the Aussies; the Olympic boxing trials, which were held last weekend at the Rendezvous Hotel; and the Scarborough Sunset Markets, which are referred to by the Perth is OK! website as a "Perth institution".

We are frequently compared with other beachside precincts around the country in where we could go wrong, but I reject these comparisons and assertions because we are unique. We are a community that is as fiercely proud as we are parochial. Although we have a world-class beach precinct, the best part of Scarborough is its community. The community extends from the Scarborough suburb into neighbouring suburbs such as Trigg, Karrinyup, Doubleview and Innaloo. Each unique suburb has its own story to tell, which is deeply intertwined with Scarborough. We understand the need to move forward and meet our potential. This can and will be done without losing who we are. We are incredible, and our people are incredible.

We have people like Oska Tallis, owner of Livid Skate Cafe, who, off his own bat, frequently activates a small adjacent laneway with live music, bringing an increased vibrancy to our community; Marcus Sarich, owner of the "Indi" or Indian Ocean Hotel, also owner of Red Hill Auditorium in Swan Hills electorate. The Indi is a name well recognised in live music circles, and for many in the Scarborough community, including myself, open mic night on Thursday is a rite of passage. There is Ben Randall, the owner of The Sandbar Scarborough Beach, which is an iconic Scarborough business that is a huge supporter of local sporting clubs, mental health charities and our local town team, the Scarborough Beach Association. Then there is the Scarborough Beach Association's president,

Wayne Bowen, who is the owner of Cordingley's Surf Store. His efforts as a local business owner and as part of the Scarborough Beach Association have delivered some incredible events like the Groundswell Festival and the Scarborough Beach Christmas carols, the Scarborough Sunset Markets and much more. These Scarborough locals, and so many more like them, and their businesses, are big a chunk of Scarborough's soul. If we lose them, we will lose part of who we are. We must move forward to not only meet our potential, but also ensure Scarborough's soul is protected.

We know that density is essential in tackling Western Australia's need for housing. Scarborough has a role to play in supporting increased housing and welcoming new members to our community to increase vibrancy and activate our beloved beachside precinct. But I am concerned that without sensible density planning and development, which is connected to transport and activity, we will risk outcomes that will not protect the identity of our iconic suburbs or deliver the future diverse housing that we need in our area. We cannot continue to let the city sprawl. Perth recently claimed the infamous title as one of the longest major cities in the world. To ensure our city continues to grow, we need to create well-connected, well-located and high-amenity areas. We know that when creating communities like this, we need collaboration between the state and local government, whilst streamlining processes to ensure we can continue to deliver much-needed housing for the community. Well-planned and well-executed density can support greater housing, whilst enhancing and creating strong communities.

To finish off, I want to make this clear, as a leader of my community, to developers who seek to develop in Scarborough. We are proud of our community. It is the best part of us, and we will fiercely defend it. If developers collaboratively engage with the Scarborough community, honestly and transparently, they will find the majority of us are reasonable. We want developers to respect our community, protect our businesses and people, help us reach our full potential and become part of our community by developing in a way that strengthens the soul of Scarborough, Perth's premier beachside destination.

With that said, can the minister please explain to me and the Scarborough community how the Cook Labor government is working to deliver much-needed housing options in Western Australia, especially for young Western Australians like me? What is the importance of effective, sensible and collaborative density planning to protect and enhance our existing communities?

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Planning) [9.44 am]: I thank the member for Scarborough for his grievance. I acknowledge that, this week, I was with the member in the heart of Scarborough on the foreshore as we handed back the redevelopment area of Scarborough to the City of Stirling. I have to say that I have full confidence in the City of Stirling, given that it is a local government that is really trying to not only facilitate much-needed density, but also ensure certainty in planning. When it can, it is streamlining planning, given the current constraints that we face. I also acknowledge the work of the local member in having ongoing engagement with his community regarding the future planning of Scarborough, which includes density.

It is always difficult as a local member because the planning system is never black and white; there is a level of discretion. I also learnt during my time as a mayor, and I think everyone knows this, that on any planning matter, there are always people for and against.

I certainly endorse and embrace the type of approach that the member for Scarborough does, which is not to shy away from these issues, but to engage with his local community and residents—to sit down at coffee meetings or whatever—and talk to people about the need for housing and density, and ensure that that process is clear and transparent to all.

I embrace the call by the local member regarding developers engaging early and being up-front. It is really critical. I always say that the best way to be is up-front and early in one's engagement. It always works better, and that is critical because we need developers to play their part to boost housing supply in Western Australia.

The national cabinet meeting on housing occurred yesterday. It is very clear that every state in the country faces the same conditions and the need for housing. I want to assure the member, and particularly the young people he identified, that we are doing everything we can to accelerate the delivery of housing in Western Australia. It is my number one focus. I am resolute that we have to use every policy we can, and that includes planning. That was also the resolution of national cabinet, which said that all states will work towards more planning reform to deliver that housing.

As the member for Scarborough said, young people want to live where they grew up, but if we do not have infill or density, particularly around transport nodes like Scarborough, young people will never be able to live where they grew up because they will simply not be able to afford to do so. Therefore, this is the critical part of the equation of encouraging density and infill in town centres, on main streets, in corridors and in the city, because it will enable housing choices for young people. Certainly, our government is also looking at our landholdings through the housing diversity pipeline—to look at how we can release land to, say, community housing providers that provide not only social housing, but also affordable rentals. We know that the critical part—it is obvious, but I will come to why not everyone gets it—is boosting housing supply and providing that choice to everyone, including young

people. I want to see great high-density developments all through our town centres and corridors. I recognise what the member talked about with the benefits that brings. The member went through a list of people and their contributions to the area. But if we want those small businesses to grow, activity on the street and amazing life and vibrancy, we need infill and density. We critically need it. It supports those economies and town centres like Scarborough.

I know it is disappointing to see—this is relevant—that the Greens federally, yesterday, came out again to attack the package proposed by the federal government. It was really sad because of the language used by the Greens. I will refer to. They said things like “spat in the face of renters” and “polishing a turd”. Can I be frank? Our government and our state take housing supply and the tight rental market very seriously. We are using every lever we can, but we are seeing the Greens disrespect everyone who is working their guts out to address this issue. Also, the approach is simply black and white. The Greens are taking very populist lines but when we scratch the surface, what they are proposing, like a rental cap, will drive rental properties out of the market.

We understand that we need housing supply to help the rental market. That is the critical issue. I urge the Greens to get behind the \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund that the community housing sector, industry and the state government supports, because we know that it will help housing supply, including for young people in Western Australia.