

STATEWIDE BUILDERS' PANEL

422. Ms L.L. BAKER to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to deliver social and affordable housing across WA.

- (1) Can the minister please outline to the house how the newly announced statewide builders' panel is helping to drive delivery of housing projects in the state?
- (2) How will this support industry, local business and jobs?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I want to thank the member for her question and her strong passion for delivering social housing in her own local community.

- (1)–(2) There has been one consistent theme that I have spoken about, and it has been highlighted in this Parliament today; that is, I have been very clear on the public record and in this Parliament when discussing the delivery of social and affordable housing. It is very clear, as the Premier has also stated, that we face significant challenges with regard to construction across the board, in both civil construction and also social and affordable housing construction. Because of the factors involved in the global pandemic, we have seen significant supply chain issues and cost escalations. With the international borders closed, we have also seen a skilled labour shortage.

We are doing everything we can as a government to support industry to help deliver social and affordable housing. We have tackled that on both sides of the equation. We have tackled that in terms of training, not just with our record on reducing TAFE fees across 180 courses, but also with our announcement in the budget of a range of other measures. That includes \$14.3 million to boost the construction workforce and to support a construction accelerated apprenticeship scheme to get workers recognised for their skills. There is also a \$1.5 million targeted overseas marketing campaign to attract skilled labour to Western Australia.

The Premier and I have announced an additional support package, recognising the pressures that the home construction sector is facing at the moment. I want to remind members that this was very much welcomed by the Master Builders Association and it was worked through with that advocacy group. We announced a \$30 million financial relief scheme to assist head contractors with unforeseen cost escalations. We have supported progress payments for Keystart builds. We are putting rise-and-fall provisions into contracts when appropriate to assist in reducing the risk for tendering builders.

We are also, critically, creating a new statewide builders' panel to develop and grow the modular sector to deliver 200 modular homes in Western Australia. We are now creating a new panel that will boost access for small and medium-sized builders. We want to reduce the burden for them to be able to deliver on our housing program. We will be simplifying the process for qualification so that small and medium-sized builders will have the opportunity now and into the future to deliver social housing.

I am deeply proud that, despite the significant pressures and challenges we face in the construction sector, our state government is introducing a range of reform measures to assist the industry in these tougher times to continue to grow and to deliver social and affordable housing.