

CORONAVIRUS — BUILDING BONUS

405. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Premier:

I refer to the work underway by the McGowan Labor government to support the Western Australian economy and protect local jobs through its \$125 million building bonus package. Can the Premier outline to the house how this package will support workers and businesses in Western Australia's housing construction sector as it recovers from the economic impacts of COVID-19?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Murray–Wellington for the question. Obviously, the coronavirus has had a massive impact on the building industry across Western Australia. That has meant, over the last few months, that the normal rate of new contracts signed for houses has gone through the floor. People have not had the confidence nor, indeed, even the ability to go out and sign up contracts for new house builds. Display villages were also closed over a large part of that period. We are the first state to reopen display villages, but we know there was a long period during which very few contracts were signed; therefore, the housing construction industry faced a potential valley of death when the current builds ran out—a valley of death of a number of months, so we had to take some decisive action.

On Sunday a week ago we launched a \$444 million housing package to ensure that there is decisive action on getting jobs back and to ensure that our industry will continue to sign up new contracts, continue to build, and, indeed, support more than 3 400 jobs across the sector. A key part of it is the \$20 000 building bonus grant that we announced on Sunday a week ago. That will ensure that any homebuyer will be able to obtain a \$20 000 grant when they build a new home. There is no cap on the value of the property and there is no income test; it is just designed to get activity, to get people out there working, and to get new contracts signed.

It builds on the commonwealth government's \$25 000 HomeBuilder grant, and if you are a first home buyer you can access the \$10 000 first home owner grant and the first home owner stamp duty concession. If you are a first home builder, you get the better part of \$70 000 of benefit towards a new home. That is quite a significant benefit, and quite a big incentive to sign up. Obviously, you can access a loan through Keystart—again, another big incentive to sign up.

We have seen huge interest in the market. Builders whom I have spoken to over the course of the last week have said to me that buyers and people seeking to sign up have been knocking their doors down to sign up for new builds. Dale Alcock reported a fivefold increase in inquiries at display homes and there has been massive interest in building new homes since the joint commonwealth–state package was announced.

I quote Cath Hart from the Housing Industry Association, who said —

This package will position WA to recover more strongly than other states by attracting more people to our remarkable state and generating jobs and business activity.

John Gelavis from the Master Builders Association said —

This particular stimulus package will be a game changer for our industry.

It will turbocharge the residential housing industry, saving many jobs and creating jobs right across our sector. From bricklayers, roof carpenters, to plumbers, electricians and apprentices that rely on our industry so much.

We are doing everything we can to get activity and work back into our construction and homebuilding sector. On top of that, we are putting in place once-in-a-generation reforms to planning laws, to cut red tape and streamline planning processes. We had some significant support for this yesterday. I wish to quote the Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison, who said yesterday —

The Government of Western Australia already has bills before its Legislative Council to accelerate major projects, reduce red tape, and facilitate bilateral arrangements to remove duplication between our assessment and approval processes. My simple messages to pass the bill. It is good for jobs. It provides a model, I believe, for other states and jurisdictions.

I thank the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Pardon? Pardon—what was that? An unusual interjection, Mr Speaker.

I thank the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, for his fulsome support for our reforms. They are very good reforms, designed to get activity and work back into the construction and building sector in Western Australia and cut through unnecessary red tape. The Prime Minister sees this; I would urge members of the state opposition to see it as well.