

SOCIAL HOUSING — HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

439. Mr H.T. JONES to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's \$2.6 billion investment in social housing and homelessness services. Can the minister update the house on how this investment is making a real difference to housing accessibility in Western Australia; and can the minister advise the house whether he is aware of any other initiatives to increase social housing supply?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for Darling Range for his commitment to social housing and homelessness in Western Australia. I am on the public record as saying that our record investment is already delivering. We set our first target of 1 300 homes within two years, and we did that one month ahead of schedule in the tightest construction market in the state's history. We have also rolled out significant homelessness reforms; I announced a new package last year. We have established Boorloo Bidee Mia, a highly successful model. We purchased Murray Street Lodge for transitional accommodation. We have boosted homelessness outreach to seven days a week, and also extended it further north to Joondalup and east to Midland. We have created new rough sleeper coordinating groups to assist with referrals of rough sleepers. We have added 155 crisis beds to the system. Critically, we have also created a signature new pilot program—the supported landlord model, through which we are purchasing 100 units to transition rough sleepers directly off the street into a supported community housing provider, because we know that to make this successful, we need to have supported tenancy. To date, we are also ahead of that target with 51 properties added to the program and 43 individuals now housed as part of the program. As part of the budget, we have extended that to a new two-year program for regional Western Australia.

It is exciting to see that we now have a federal government that recognises social housing investment. The federal government last weekend announced a \$2 billion social housing accelerator fund, and Western Australia is getting its fair share. An amount of \$209 million will complement the existing innovative programs through which we are working on social housing.

I also note that the federal government wants to get up its \$10 billion housing Australia future fund. I note that the Community Housing Industry Association, the Northern Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Alliance, Homelessness Australia, the Property Council of Australia, Industry Super Australia, Everybody's Home and National Shelter have said that the time has now come to pass this legislation. It is interesting that all state housing ministers, including the Liberal state ministers, wrote to senators urging them to pass the bill. Who is stopping it? There are two key political parties. The first is the Liberal Party. Remember its record in federal government. There was no social housing —

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr J.N. CAREY: There was no social housing investment and it completely yanked out funding for remote communities. That is in contrast to the Rudd government, which propped up the Barnett government's social housing expenditure. That is well known and on the public record.

The other part of that coalition, or the "noalition" as the Prime Minister has said, is the Australian Greens, or "Tory-lite". The Greens are not interested in outcomes. They are not interested in delivery and, of course, they never have to be because they are never in government and they never have to deliver any physical social housing.

We have this perverse coalition of the Liberals and Greens that is blocking a major funding boost for social housing across Australia that is supported by critical housing, property and a range of other national stakeholders. These parties have their heads in the sand. As I have said before, there is a very clear line between that side and this side. There were no social housing policies from that side for six years, while there was a massive number of reforms from this side to deliver social housing for our most vulnerable.