

**STATEWIDE BUILDERS PANEL**

*Statement by Minister for Housing*

**MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing)** [9.20 am]: I rise to inform the house of the establishment of our government's statewide builders panel. Our government is boosting social housing stock, with 1 000 homes added since our record investment and a further 1 051 under contract or construction. It is continuing to seek ways to boost delivery across our state. Last year, our government announced that it was calling for more small and medium businesses to nominate for the panel, and it has now been established. This is one of our many reforms in the housing portfolio, proactively working with industry to cut red tape for builders while boosting the delivery of social housing to ensure that we are delivering as soon as possible.

The expression of interest process for the panel was launched in July 2022 and received an overwhelming response, with 101 applications received from small, medium and large companies from both metropolitan and regional Western Australia. Of those companies, 85 have been appointed to the panel. It is not just these 85 successful builders; in future, other businesses will have increased opportunities to access the panel. The establishment of the panel means new construction and refurbishment projects can now be rapidly contracted, as building companies appointed to the new panel are pre-approved to build social housing. The program will also be beneficial to business within the building and construction sector, allowing 85 businesses from across WA, including small, local mum-and-dad businesses, to benefit from this government's record investment in social housing delivery. To encourage more small and medium businesses to apply, the process for qualification was simplified. We had an overwhelming response, and I am proud to see so many small businesses appointed to the panel. It is also great to see the diverse range of businesses that have been appointed. Approximately 10 per cent are Indigenous businesses, 36 per cent are regional businesses and 49 per cent are small businesses.

Since the announcement of the statewide builders panel in December, dozens of builders have been contacted to gauge their ability to take on contracts in the short term to commence the pipeline of work to deliver social housing. This reform is all about cutting red tape for the sector, making it easier to do businesses with government. It is one of many reforms that are speeding up the delivery of social housing across Western Australia, such as timber frame builds, modular builds, prefabricated homes and spot purchasing, as part of our record \$2.4 billion investment in housing and homelessness programs.