

HOMELESSNESS — REGIONS

100. Ms L. DALTON to the Minister for Homelessness:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to delivering alternative accommodation options across regional Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the construction of the Geraldton Aboriginal short-stay accommodation facility, which will support Aboriginal people in the midwest Gascoyne region?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether is aware of any other policies to support and improve housing outcomes for Western Australians?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

- (1)–(2) I want to thank the member for Geraldton for her commitment to short-stay accommodation. As the house knows, we are investing a record \$2.6 billion in social housing and homelessness programs. Part of that picture and part of that work is actually driving the development of short-stay accommodation. Short-stay accommodation does not get a lot of attention but is actually critical to providing support for Aboriginal Western Australians. It is not well known, but we already have three Aboriginal short-stay facility in WA—in Kalgoorlie, Derby and Broome. We are pushing on and getting on with the job to deliver more. That is why we made a commitment to deliver the Geraldton Aboriginal short-stay facility in the member's electorate.

For those who are unfamiliar, this is about providing culturally safe and secure accommodation. People come in from country for many different reasons—services, business, cultural and family reasons—so short-stay provides that accommodation for Aboriginal people who might not have anywhere else to go or anywhere else to stay during their visit and in those circumstances may end up sleeping rough in a town. Therefore, these measures are critical to improving the lives of Aboriginal people in Western Australia, and this accommodation will house up to 100 people. I was very pleased to join the Premier only recently to announce the major milestone with the awarding of the contract of \$24.3 million to the midwest builder GBSC Yurra to build the Geraldton short-stay facility. I think it is brilliant that an Aboriginal-registered and local builder has the demonstrated experience to deliver this type of project. This is an important part of that broader package of providing transitional housing support and helping with supply.

I do note, though, that today there was another critical piece of legislation that was about providing security and safety to renters in the rental market. We know this and I have been on the record as saying that we face extraordinary times. COVID has radically reshaped our housing market, and we are deeply aware that the rental market is under pressure. That is why we have created a rental relief scheme to provide support. That is why we have created a financial incentive to get Airbnb. That is why we want to provide a sense of security to renters so that they can do minor modifications, so that they can have pets and so that they can have a sense of home, and today in this house, when the vote came up, the Nationals WA members opposed it. They are no friends of renters. In the toughest market we face, they said, "We don't care. We don't care."

Several opposition members interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: Here we have dumb and dumber. They remind me of the 1994 film—the Jim Carrey of the Parliament. We never said the legislation was about boosting supply. What we said was that it was providing protection for renters in the rental market. Members opposite do not care about them. They do not care about them at all. They come in here and feign concern for renters, and when they have a choice to give greater protection to renters, they walk out the door. The Liberals did not even turn up. They cannot even be bothered. The Leader of the Liberal Party has feigned concern about the rental market. We had a vote in this house on critical legislation about the security and safety of renters, and she was not even here. What a disgrace! What a shame that she cannot even be bothered. Not one Liberal voted on critical legislation to provide safety and security to renters. There is a clear divide in this house between this side that is consistently driving reform to boost supply to protect and support renters, and that side, not one policy —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I know that the Liberal member is getting agitated. I know that she is embarrassed because she does not have one policy on social housing or renters. Today she had a choice.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I know she has no policies, but today she had a choice to back renters and she did not.