

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION — AFFORDABILITY

443. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:

I refer to a question I asked the Premier last Thursday on the high cost of rental apartments and the inappropriate focus by the Cook Labor government on high-rise developments in my electorate.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr D.J. HONEY: The Premier ridiculed my concerns and compared my electorate with Cannington.

(1) Given that 28 per cent of housing in the Town of Claremont comprises units and apartments —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills, that is disorderly.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I repeat —

Given that 28 per cent of housing in the Town of Claremont comprises units and apartments and that only 8.5 per cent of the City of Cannington comprises units and apartments, why does the Premier continue to mislead the public about the disproportionate and substantial impact of high-rise development in the western suburbs?

(2) Why does the government continue to focus on —

Mr T. Healy interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Southern River! The number of interjections on this question is totally unacceptable. People should be able to ask a question in this house and get a response from the relevant minister or Premier without incessant interjections.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I repeat —

Why does the government continue to focus on destroying the amenity of the western suburbs with inappropriate high-rise developments in ordinary suburban streets rather than providing more affordable developments in other suburbs?

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski: Nimby.

The SPEAKER: I know that was you, member for Kingsley. The Premier in response.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. As you observed, this is probably the last question of question time before the winter break. I wish everyone a great break over the winter period and remind everyone to have a break. We need you to come back full of energy and life.

(1)–(2) I can assure the member for Cottesloe that there was no reluctance on my part to answer his question recently about housing in his electorate. My difficulty in answering it was that I was not sure what the member was asking because it was such a confused jumble of narratives and I was unclear what he actually wanted me to say, so let me be really clear: the Minister for Housing, and in his role as Minister for Planning, is focused on one thing and one thing only, and that is providing diversity in a vibrant housing sector that will allow us to do two things. The first is to provide people with the accommodation they desire and the second is to provide them with the accommodation they need. That is what we are doing as part of our \$2.6 billion strategy around homelessness and housing to continue to make sure that we provide people with the accommodation they need because we understand that housing is a crucial aspect of relieving poverty and hardship in our community. Earlier in question time, the Minister for Housing provided an ample description of our policies and their effectiveness.

The other thing we want to do is to make sure that we provide a diversity of housing throughout the community, because not everyone wants to live on a quarter-acre block or in a suburb that cannot be properly serviced by public transport or other amenities, and not everyone aspires to owning a McMansion. As we have seen to our great regret in Perth, urban sprawl does not provide a solution for sustainable communities. We need to make sure that we have a diversity of accommodation right across the community—in the member for Cottesloe's electorate and in my electorate. The member has an inner-city electorate whereas mine is an outer-urban electorate. Even there, particularly around the train stations, property developers are developing appropriate accommodation that includes medium to high-density housing, because that is what we do around those nodes. The member's electorate is closer to the city. It is not surprising that a lot of people in his electorate are voting with their feet and buying those places. They want to live in that sort of accommodation. I never thought that I would be on my feet in this place explaining to the

Liberal Party that this is called the market. There is demand for a diversity of housing product and the market is providing a diverse supply of housing product. That is the way it should be. We want to continue to support that process.