

HOMELESSNESS — SOCIAL HOUSING

**46. Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE to the Minister for Homelessness:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record investment to support people experiencing homelessness.

- (1) Can the minister outline how this government's \$7.5 million support for St Patrick's Community Support Centre in Fremantle will assist people in the local community?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this funding builds on this government's investment to bolster the state's social housing stock?

**Mr J.N. CAREY replied:**

- (1)–(2) I want to thank the member for his question and his support of St Pat's in Fremantle. As we know, St Pat's is a highly credible and long-term provider of homelessness services. I have gone out there numerous times, and it always reminds me that when one speaks to people directly and to the clients who go through St Pat's—I think this is really acute for us all to remember—homelessness can happen to anyone. I have met people who have had incredible lives, financially rewarding lives, who end up in very dire situations and who end up rough sleeping. That is why I am very pleased that we have provided \$7.5 million as part of a \$12 million redevelopment to replace existing accommodation to enable 28 new social housing dwellings. This will be based around the Housing First Homelessness Initiative approach, which is about tenants having support to wraparound services. This funding announcement comes out of our reforms. I made a general call for submissions, asking anyone to come forward to propose a new project. This is an example of that procurement reform and our commitment to working with the community housing sector.

While I am on this topic, I want to say that another credible provider, of course, is Ruah Community Services, and that provider is in my own electorate. When we talk about Ruah, that local service provider has been operating within 100 metres of its current operation for more than 60 years. It is highly credible and provides assistance to the most vulnerable in Western Australia, and it has deep respect. I have to say that it has been unfortunate that we have seen a targeted campaign at such a credible provider. Ruah staff, who are providing support to the most vulnerable people, have been targeted and harassed by certain individuals. What is clear about this campaign is that a couple of individuals have made consistent complaints—as Ruah stated, “egregious” complaints—about them, including a hotel that, I have to say, when I looked at the more than 400 reviews of the hotel in question from TripAdvisor or Google, has not had one complaint about homelessness or Ruah opposite that hotel, and if it were a problem, we think there would be. This morning we heard the Leader of the Liberal Party in this chamber talking about compassion for people doing it tough. What I find contradictory about that is that there are WA Liberals aspiring to be candidates for the Liberal Party who apparently do not need to show compassion when buying preselection for seats. Of course, I am talking about City of Perth Councillor Brent Fleeton who shows no compassion and no sympathy for those doing it tough on our streets. Brent has form here. He paid for a social media advertisement in which he encouraged residents to make any complaints about RUAH after its launch and said that it is only through consistent reporting of incidents can action be taken against Ruah.

He has also made incredible stereotypes about tenants in the social housing system, saying that they bring noise complaints, litter and declining property values. Of course, this is the City of Perth councillor who took a photo of a person sleeping rough, someone quietly bedding down for the night on a street in Sydney, and put it in an Instagram story. This is cruel, nasty and venomous, and this is the new-improved Liberal Party. A leopard never changes its spots. This is not the compassion that the Leader of the Liberal Party talks about. We face incredible times. COVID has radically reshaped our housing market. Our government is doing everything it can to boost social housing supply and provide support for the most vulnerable. We have a Leader of the Liberal Party who talks about compassion, yet the prospective Liberal Party candidate for Nedlands, who appears certain to get it, shows venom, a lack of sympathy and a lack of empathy for people doing it tough on our streets. Welcome to the new Liberal Party of Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please!