

CHILDREN'S HOSPICE — CITY OF NEDLANDS

456. Dr K. STRATTON to the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the development of Western Australia's first children's hospice.

- (1) Can the minister outline how planning reforms delivered by this Labor government were able to provide planning approval for this significantly important facility?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether he is aware of anyone who opposes the planning approval for this facility?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for her question and for her strong advocacy for this hospice. On 28 July this year, during our winter break, the Western Australian Planning Commission considered and approved this hospice—the first of its kind—for children and families who are going through an experience that I think most of us could never bear to imagine. This facility is incredibly important for the state of Western Australia as it will provide safe, comforting and dedicated accommodation for children and their families at their most critical time of need. The hospice will provide sensitive palliative care services and support holistic care for children during these challenging times. I welcome the decision by the WAPC, which was made possible because of our government's reforms under the previous planning minister. The significant developments pathway process enables projects of state significance to be considered with respect by a body of the nature of the WA Planning Commission. I cannot think of any project that deserves that kind of process more.

I have put on the record that the opposition has no social housing policies—not one—with 16 months to go to the election campaign, but I have news for members: the opposition has made a commitment on the planning front. It has made a commitment to abolish the pathway that we created for the hospice. Although it is not 100 per cent clear, Hon Neil Thomson said that the opposition has committed to not only doing that but also reinstating and reinforcing the role of local government. I want to be very clear about what the Liberals are saying: that this kind of project, which deserves considered respect, would go back to the Nedlands council. I want to talk about the level of debate that the Liberal Party is endorsing in Western Australia. One councillor said that the hospice was going to be a white elephant and said —

“Because of the site's proximity to the army base, if that base gets attacked, guess what? This site will also suffer damage ... From the air, how much different does it look? It's a target.”

Another councillor said in that debate that the hospice would be the coastal arm of the Perth Children's Hospital and claimed that she had been told—I find this incredible—that children may not die at the facility. This is the level of debate and respect at the City of Nedlands. The Liberal Party of Western Australia is endorsing that type of debate and that type of consideration —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, member for Cottesloe!

Mr J.N. CAREY: The opposition is endorsing that kind of debate in Western Australia by saying that it would abolish this pathway and reinforce and reinstate the role of local government. This project and others like it deserve planning consideration by expertise that is not informed by incredibly insensitive, disrespectful and, quite frankly, absurd debate about planning policies in Western Australia. There is a clear choice. Across Australia, every local government is looking at how to boost housing supply through streamlining planning policy, yet here we have an opposition that has no social housing policy but would reinstate a policy that would elevate that kind of appalling public debate.