

HOUSING — BENTLEY 360 PROJECT

759. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the Bentley 360 project on 22 hectares of public land and the following statement on 18 June 2019 by former Minister for Housing the member for Willagee in response to a question from the member for Forrestfield —

The Bentley 360 project is designed to deliver at least 1 500 new homes only 15 minutes from where we sit right now. It is a critical piece of urban infrastructure that can add to the thoughtful density that is required for this city. More importantly, it will create 2 200 jobs across its life and over \$1 billion worth of economic activity through its construction phase.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Madam Speaker, I draw your attention to standing order 77(1)(a), which states that questions should not contain certain things, which it then lists. The list includes preambles and, at the end, quotations. It would appear that the entire question of the member for Cottesloe is in fact a quotation. Therefore, it is not in accordance with the standing orders.

The SPEAKER: The member for Cottesloe is not the first person to use a quote when asking a question. I am quite happy to have some discussion with the member for Cannington about the formation of questions at a later stage if he would like. In this instance, I am allowing the question to proceed.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Why, four years after the demolition of Brownlie Towers, is the government still only assessing the project, with development time lines yet to be confirmed?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for his question. First of all, I want to put on the public record that we were left a mess in regard to that site by the former Liberal–National government. That is well known. Press at the time talked about a tower of 160 rooms that was left empty and vacant. It was your former government that left us a mess with Bentley 360.

Dr D.J. Honey: It is four years after you demolished it.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! The minister has been asked a question; I would like to hear the answer.

Mr J.N. CAREY: Something also happened during that time, and that was the COVID-19 pandemic. As we know, COVID radically reshaped the housing and construction market. I find it interesting, but not surprising, that the member for Cottesloe, who regularly outlines a conspiracy theory in this chamber that somehow this government just wants density in his western suburbs, fails to understand the housing market.

Dr D.J. Honey: You haven't built anything.

Mr J.N. CAREY: Member, can I answer the question or will you be rude and continue to interject?

Dr D.J. Honey: I will interject when I think it's appropriate.

Mr J.N. CAREY: My observation about the member for Cottesloe is that he is the most arrogant person in this chamber. He is always lecturing everyone else, including his own colleagues. In fact, some of his colleagues have complained about his lectures.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members! Minister, we have an MPI to get onto, so I ask you to perhaps return to answering the question that was asked.

Mr J.N. CAREY: The member does not understand basic housing economics. In this post-COVID world, we are seeing density developed in the western suburbs because that is where it is still profitable to do that. That is where the construction sector has focused its efforts. Everyone else in Western Australia understands that. Every other industry understands that. The member for Cottesloe lives in an alternative reality; his main focus is traffic in Cottesloe and not housing supply. I want to be very clear: our state government is making a significant investment in social housing and homelessness. Because of the rapid acceleration of cost and lack of capacity in this post-COVID world, we have focused on pumping out homes within a constrained market, and we have done that. More than 1 600 social homes have been delivered to date. Now, as the market starts to taper and there is more capacity in the system, we are working on those larger scale projects. I anticipate that we will make some major announcements this year about high-density affordable and social housing.

Bentley 360 is well known to be a more complex site. Significant remediation work needs to be done at that site. That work needs to be undertaken first. I appreciate that the opposition wants to paint this as a simple policy issue, but it is far more complex than that. Western Australians can understand that our government is doing everything it can and using every policy lever it can to deliver more social and affordable housing.

