

HOUSING — AFFORDABILITY

**703. Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE to the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing across Western Australia. Can the minister advise the house how initiatives delivered by this government, such as the infrastructure development fund and stamp duty rebates, are providing more housing supply across the state?

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

I thank the member for his question. I also cheekily acknowledge one of my casual staff members, Stephanie Gooch, and her husband, Tim Kerin, who last week welcomed their first child—a daughter, Sophia Grace Kerin. I love your work. Congratulations.

I thank the member. I am very pleased that our government—it is important work!—is continuing to deliver reforms and policy measures to respond to the critical need to boost housing supply in Western Australia. As I have said before in this place, COVID has radically reshaped our housing and construction markets. It has affected them in many ways, with skilled labour shortages, cost escalations and global supply issues. This has affected housing markets across Australia, but it has particularly affected the development of apartments and density development. The housing sector will tell members that we have seen cost escalations of up to 40 per cent. That means that, particularly for density developments, it is make or break. It actually means that as a result of those cost escalations, we have not seen the density development that we need. As a result, our state government is responding through a range of policy measures. It was brilliant today to join with the Premier and the Deputy Premier to announce two measures. The first is the extension of the stamp duty concession for apartments. We brought in an up-front concession of 100 per cent for off-the-plan apartments up to \$650 000 and tapering off. We announced today that we are extending the concession to apartments that are under construction. The advice is that this will assist. Some builders and developers were holding off because they wanted their customers to benefit from the off-the-plan rebate. They can start going, because now homes or apartments under construction are eligible. Just to be very clear, for an apartment costing around \$650 000, that is a stamp duty reduction of more than \$18 000. That is assisting with affordability and assisting with projects.

The second measure we announced is a second tranche of our infrastructure fund—another more than \$15 million to support 15 infill projects to deliver 1 500 apartments. To date, that infrastructure fund has allocated \$22 million to assist 2 200 apartments to be built. We know that in this market, housing across the continuum—social, affordable, medium and even high-end product—is needed to assist with the rental market, and this measure has been welcomed by industry.

Compare our approach with that of the opposition. It is nearly now six full years and the opposition has not announced one housing policy solution, but the member for Cottesloe is running around making commitments about adding more red tape to development, thereby abolishing a significant pathway for community housing and major housing. The latest commitment to review the development assessment panels to concentrate more power back to local government would actually make it harder to improve housing in Western Australia. What is more astonishing than the member for Cottesloe making policy on the run is that the Leader of the Liberal Party says absolutely nothing. Every state across this country is driving the cutting and streamlining of the approvals process to boost housing supply, but the member for Cottesloe is running around making policy announcements in the *Subiaco Post* and is more focused on traffic issues than housing supply. The Leader of the Liberal Party is silent on housing and planning reform. Zilch. Nothing to be seen here. It is incredible. There is a stark contrast between those opposite, who are more concerned about adding more red tape, stopping housing development and making it more difficult for individual property owners to redevelop their homes, and we on this side, who are working, along with every other state in this country, to streamline and cut red tape to accelerate the delivery of housing in Western Australia.