

HOUSING — NATIONAL RENTAL AFFORDABILITY SCHEME

**1009. Hon WILSON TUCKER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Housing:**

I note the impending end of the national rental affordability scheme and the recent announcement by the federal housing minister that commonwealth rent assistance payments will not be increased to meet the soaring cost of rent. I further note the record low vacancy rate, with reports that Perth housing stock is at its lowest level in 12 years.

- (1) Does the minister agree that Western Australia is facing a rental crisis?
- (2) With a market tipped in favour of landlords, what assistance can the government offer to vulnerable renters?

**The PRESIDENT:** Before I give the call to the Leader of the House, I would like to point out that part (1) of that question seeks an opinion and therefore it contravenes the standing orders, but I will ask the Leader of the House whether she is able to respond.

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

Thank you, President; indeed, I can. I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(2) The McGowan government remains committed to increasing social housing supply and has invested a record \$2.4 billion over four years to improve the quality and accessibility of social housing and homelessness services in Western Australia. This is on top of several other programs, including the housing diversity pipeline and targeted land releases to boost affordable housing supply. Since the start of the last financial year, 743 new homes have been delivered with over 900 homes under contract or construction. This continued investment will deliver 3 300 social homes and carry out refurbishment and maintenance work to many thousands more. The McGowan government continues to invest and provide affordable housing opportunities through a range of measures, including Keystart home loans, which are unique to Western Australia, and allowing low-income households to get into their own homes by providing a low barrier pathway to affordable home ownership. Bond assistance loans are available from the Department of Communities to overcome the up-front cost of renting in the private market. If individuals who are currently on the NRAS need assistance, the Department of Communities will assess their needs on a case-by-case basis and provide them with information on their housing options and the appropriate support services. This may be the provision of social housing, which is an affordable rental option for those on low incomes.