

KEYSTART — INTEREST RATE POLICY

**404. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to deliver genuine cost-of-living relief for Western Australians. Can the minister outline to the house how this government's decision to revise Keystart's interest rate policy will assist thousands of WA home owners facing cost-of-living pressures and how this government's housing policies compare with the policies of the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA?

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

I want to thank the member for his question. As I have previously reported to this house, our government has undertaken a number of ongoing and significant reforms to housing policy in Western Australia, recognising that we are very deeply cognisant of the current tight rental market and also the heated construction market. As I have said before to this chamber, COVID has radically reshaped housing markets in both Western Australia and Australia. Every state is looking at its policy settings to both accelerate the delivery of social housing and provide assistance to those in need, but also to look at settings in relation to affordability.

There has been a range of reforms. We brought in stamp duty concessions—two sets of reforms—and we lifted the tax concession to 100 per cent for affordable apartments in the most recent budget. We are bringing in a 50 per cent land tax concession for build-to-rent developments to boost affordable apartments. We made changes to Keystart reflecting changes in the median price and lifting the property cap. Even today, I announced another change relating to bond assistance loans making them more flexible with increasing eligibility, and also increasing the amount for those who might need it to enter the private rental market. Of course, we yesterday announced a new Keystart policy on interest rates.

To be very clear, we did a significant review. It is not what the opposition claims. This has gone through Expenditure Review Committee and cabinet processes. It is not like the shambolic processes we saw with the previous Liberal–National government. The opposition presupposed that one day I made a decision by myself, as the minister, and said to everyone around me, “Bugger you; I don’t care, and I’m just going to make this policy decision.” Anyone who understands knows that all reforms that we are introducing are considered, tested, costed and then rolled out. That is how we have done all our housing reforms. We are moving to a new policy of 350 basis points above the cash rate, recognising that Keystart is a transitional lender. Ultimately, there is a risk there. That policy recognises that risk and will pay for the operation of Keystart. We know it will provide financial relief to households. As the Premier has already clearly outlined to Western Australians, this will assist many households through significant financial relief, and that new policy will come into place on 1 July.

The opposition attacked us. It has attacked us before, and then when we make a decision, it attacks us again. Hon Steve Martin is like Humpty Dumpty on the wall. We do not know exactly which way he will fall. I like a good pun!

**Mr R.H. Cook** interjected.

**Mr J.N. CAREY:** I know; there is a workshop out the back delivering these!

The point I make is this: this is another reform that we have announced that has been worked on, considered and delivered. That is in contrast to the opposition. I remind members that not one social housing policy has been announced in six years. It has no policies on homelessness; it opposed Boorloo Bidee Mia; it opposed our supported landlord model; it opposed and says that extra money for social housing is a waste of funding, despite our delivery; it opposes planning reform; and it has attacked our infrastructure fund. My questions are this: What does the opposition stand for? What are its solutions? What is its housing policy? At the moment, and members can keep checking its website, it is nil.