

SOCIAL HOUSING — HOMELESSNESS

**470. Mr S.A. MILLMAN to the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record \$2.6 billion investment in social housing and homelessness measures in Western Australia. Can the minister advise the house of the steps being taken by this government to bolster the delivery of 4 000 social homes across the state, and can the minister advise the house if he is aware of anyone who is not supportive of these initiatives to deliver more homes as quickly as possible?

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

I thank the member for his question. He is right: our government is making an incredible investment of \$2.6 billion over four years in social housing and homelessness programs. We recently announced another initiative to help boost social housing supply. All the advice now from builders and the sector is that we are seeing some tapering in housing capacity; that is, cost escalations are starting to decline. CoreLogic key data shows that cost escalations are at the lowest for Australia since September 2020. In fact, Western Australia is at one of the lows at 0.5 per cent. That is why I announced a call for submissions process that asked for any interested builders to come forward with ideas and proposals, including—this is critical—asking for development-ready projects; namely, projects that may have had development applications approved with land that perhaps did not proceed because of market conditions the state could adopt, recognising—this is the reality—that 60 to 70 per cent of apartment dwellings that had been approved post COVID have not been built. That is the reality we face. We want to encourage builders to come forward, but particularly those who already have projects ready or have been approved that the state could adopt. That is what we are trying to do. We are trying to think outside the box.

Industry welcomes it. The community housing sector welcomes it. One person says no. As members can guess, they are a WA Liberal—Hon Steve Martin. He said, I quote, and I kid you not, "They're out of ideas." Therefore, I thought I would very quickly go through all the ideas that we have done. We have invested \$2.6 billion for 4 000 homes. We are increasing flexibility with timber frame, modular and prefabs and spot purchasing. We have developed new procurement processes to make it easier for builders. We have made approvals for public and community housing quicker, with a huge funding boost for the spot purchasing program. We are reviewing and converting government regional officer housing, unlocking lazy land and applying planning reforms to streamline housing supply. We are investing \$150 million in grants for community housing and a range of significant projects like Subiaco East. We are investing in regional housing through the remote communities fund. We have created a new supported landlords model to tackle homelessness and established Boorloo Bidee Mia and Murray Street Lodge and new coordinating rough sleeper groups for better referrals. We have boosted homeless outreach to seven days a week and extended it to Midland and Joondalup. There is a new \$80 million infrastructure fund. Those are just some of the ideas. I need a cigarette, and I do not even smoke!

I am really interested in comparing that with the opposition. Interestingly, a conversation captured this very well. I have just listed all those ideas, and what have the Liberals and Nationals offered? Nothing. In fact, on ABC morning radio, according to my notes, this was the question asked by Nadia —

But do you have some ideas, Steve Martin, I appreciate what you're saying, but I mean...

He said —

Nadia, I would love to be in a position where I could pull the levers of Government. We're in Opposition. It's not my job.

It is not his job to create one policy to take to the next election! Not one policy! This group has now been in opposition for six and a half years and it has not put forward one social housing policy—not at the last election and not now, and when tested on ABC radio, Hon Steve Martin said, "It's not my job." He is happy to criticise the whole list of reforms and ideas that we are driving every day. There is a clear difference between that side and this side. Do members know what? The housing industry —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please.

**Mr J.N. CAREY:** They love to interject.

The housing industry knows this. It has the opposition's measure. The community housing sector knows this. It knows that the opposition is a policy vacuum on social housing in Western Australia.