

CORONAVIRUS — SOCIAL HOUSING ECONOMIC RECOVERY PACKAGE

754. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to drive economic activity in WA through its massive investment in supporting our building and construction sectors.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the work underway to build new homes or refurbish existing housing as part of the government's \$319 million social housing economic recovery package?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how this investment is supporting local jobs and local businesses?

Mr P.C. TINLEY replied:

I thank the member for the question and for his enduring interest in the construction industry and in jobs.

- (1)–(2) I am very happy to talk about the social housing economic recovery—SHER—package that was designed by the McGowan government to save jobs in the residential construction industry. There is nothing a government can do faster than get on with building social houses. As I said before, I am happy to report that I have brought back to the chamber a progress report about how that \$319 million program has been progressing. We currently have 99 new builds of the 250 that were identified; we have allocated 48 to the metro area and 51 to the regional area. The first of those builds will occur at the beginning of next month, so I am very happy to see that trades from the design end right through to the construction and occupation end of the housing continuum are getting underway in both the metro and regional areas. That \$319 million is also going towards regional maintenance that will do a deep refurbishment and upgrade some 1 500 public dwellings, which will give us another 20-plus years out of those assets.

Picking up from where the Treasurer left off about where the Nationals WA sits in relation to its ambition to support regional jobs, I am happy to say that this government is not a threat to regional jobs or regional businesses. I have directed the agencies to ensure that we are actually delivering in the regions for regional businesses, to ensure that local people in local towns in those regions have the opportunity—as we do in the metro—to have a meaningful job—to go to work, to help sustain themselves and their families throughout their whole life.

To date, for 175 properties, we have spent \$1.498 484 million in regional maintenance works, which were awarded to 23 contractors—all of which are local trades. By way of example, so that members can understand the nature and depth of how seriously we take regional businesses and regional Western Australians and the support we want to give to those trades in the regions, we have spent \$170 000 for internal painting of 14 properties in Broome, \$197 000 for external painting of 33 properties in Esperance, and \$103 000 for internal painting of eight properties in Albany. These are the sorts of commitments that employ Western Australians that the McGowan government is making at the enterprise level. I am also happy to say that the first refurbishment contract under the social housing economic recovery package was awarded earlier this month to two properties in Karratha. In that contract alone there was some \$600 000-plus for a company called Karratha Contracting, which is a local company that has never done business with the Department of Communities before. It has taken on an apprentice, an Aboriginal trainee and an additional tradesman to undertake some of that work. That is the sort of commitment that comes from a government that is very serious about directly supporting jobs and ensuring the sustainability of industry. When we come out of this pandemic—and we will—we will have an economy that has momentum and will deliver for Western Australians.