

PLANNING REFORM

89. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to make Western Australia a vibrant and connected place to live and work.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government is creating new opportunities for housing, including through housing and planning reforms?
- (2) Is the minister aware of anyone who is opposed to Western Australians of all ages staying in their communities as their housing needs change?

The SPEAKER: Minister, before I give you the call, can I say that I am glad we had a group of students in the public gallery for those first couple of questions. Welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your tour.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Thornlie for his question.

- (1)–(2) Yesterday, the government announced a range of reforms to its planning system to make it easier to buy a house, to live in a house and to rent a house in Western Australia. There is enormous demand throughout regional WA for affordable workers' accommodation. In many instances the land developers in those areas are local councils. Part of the reforms we announced yesterday include a new fund to help support infrastructure provision for new housing throughout regional WA. We know that we simply need more housing, more housing choice and a diversity of housing in WA. We cannot continue to just build the four by twos. We need two-bedroom apartments and one-bedroom apartments. We need a range of accommodation because there are a lot of people out there who are single or separated and who need housing choice. If we do not provide housing choice, we will not be providing the housing supply for future generations.

Examples of our reforms include an infrastructure fund, as I said, to help support infill development and regional accommodation, and the implementation of a permanent special pathway for major projects. Today we also announced the new medium-density housing code. It is the first time we have released the new rules of how medium density should be rolled out across the suburbs and across the state. We do not want to see the wholesale subdivision of suburbs that occurred under the previous government. It basically subdivided every street in a suburb and called that reform. We want precincts of activity, precincts of density, locked in near train stations and activity centres. With that, we will get better amenity, better public open space, more tree canopy, and better and more sustainable living for our future populations.

I was disappointed, but not surprised, to hear the views of the Liberal Party and Nationals WA yesterday. They were all over the place. From the old party of the free market, members have abandoned the traditional Liberal Party that used to exist in this state. I turn first to the Liberal member Mr Steve Martin, who said that the infrastructure fund would do nothing to help solve the housing process. Meanwhile, the Leader of the Opposition was out there welcoming our announcement, saying it was copying the announcement they made more recently. Within one day this alliance was eating each other up. They do not know whether to welcome something or oppose something. The Leader of the National Party and Leader of the Opposition basically said, "This is good. It copies our policy, but we would have been spending a billion dollars." Today he comes in and asks why are we spending any money. He came in yesterday and said, "We would have spent a billion dollars." I will give him a hint: he was there for eight years with \$8 billion of royalties for regions and he did not do it.

We then had the predictable comments from the former Leader of the Liberal Party. He made outrageous accusations. On one day, the Liberal Party comes in and says, "We need more housing. What are you doing to get more housing?" We say, "Here it is; here is what we are doing to get more housing." And it says, "Oh, how dare you do anything to get more housing!" Who do members opposite think is going to build the housing in WA?

We had another outrageous comment, again from Mr Steve Martin, who said that the outer suburbs had been ignored in our announcement. I give the member a hint: we announced the headworks fund to help fuel Metronet precincts. There are a lot of Metronet stations in the outer suburbs, I will say, such as Yanchep, Alkimos, Ellenbrook and Byford—all over the place. The opposition cannot come in here and ask any questions about housing. It opposes everything this government is doing to increase housing supply. It opposes everything we are doing to make sure that there are affordable homes for people to live in, not just for today, but for generations to come. We have a responsibility to think not just about ourselves, but about our children and our children's children. Older people who want to downsize currently have to move out of their suburbs into a new area—disconnected from their friends, disconnected from their well-known

shopping centre and disconnected from their medical facilities—because there is no supply. The big demand here is for us to increase supply. We are very proud of all the innovative initiatives we have to increase housing supply in this state.

The SPEAKER: I just note that members of the other house, the upper house, are referred to by the title “Honourable” and then their name, as opposed to Mr or Ms or some other title.