

HOUSING — AFFORDABILITY

29. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the government's significant efforts to deliver more affordable homes for Western Australians and to create more options for diversity in housing across our state.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how our government is helping drive infill development across our suburbs?
- (2) Can the minister also advise the house whether she is aware of anyone who opposes creating more affordable housing for Western Australians?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

(1)–(2) Speaker—

A member interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Funny you should ask that!

I thank the member for Belmont for that question. As members know, we are undertaking significant reform across the community to deliver housing choice in every suburb. We know that the community does not want wholesale subdivision of their land or their properties; but we need to provide housing choice. We also need to enable people to age in place. It is about enabling older people to move from their existing home into a small unit or apartment and stay in their community so that they can access the same medical services and go to the same shopping centre. That is a key part. The other part, of course, is that when our younger people want to enter the property market, they want real choice between buying a new house-and-land package in an outer suburb or a smaller home in a suburb that they know and love. That is the thrust of our reforms.

What are we doing? We are doing things like the housing diversity pipeline with the Minister for Housing, using lazy land to support new infill development. We will be releasing very soon the final medium-density code, which will provide guidelines on how to deliver significant medium density across the suburbs without experiencing some of the negatives that have been experienced in the past, including impact on tree canopy and some of the other negative consequences.

We are also undertaking planning reform through the state development assessment unit. We are making changes to developer contributions. We are supporting structure planning and precinct planning through a central agency. We are creating a state referral unit to make it even easier to get new housing developed in a new time profile.

Of course we know that the Liberal Party has been very, very anti-development. We know what happened under the previous leadership of the member for Cottesloe. I feel sorry for you two sitting next to each other; it must be very awkward! The biggest debates the member for Mandurah and I have had are about what is the best musical we have attended. You two, how awkward is it sitting next to each other constantly?

Dr D.J. Honey: It is only awkward for you.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is not awkward for us at all. "Awkward" is not the word I would use to describe how we look upon you two sitting next to each other.

When the former Liberal leader was interviewed about holding onto the leadership, his main reason for wanting to hold onto the leadership was to try to destroy me, saying that the Minister for Planning was out there being outrageous on planning reform. The member for Cottesloe opposes any development on Stirling Highway. New Leader of the Liberal Party, do you support any development on Stirling Highway?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please. Minister, you can of course ask rhetorical questions but you cannot anticipate answers necessarily from those opposite, because question time is about ministers being asked questions.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Vasse, "Dial a Quote", only responds when the media is calling, not when anyone else is asking for a policy position.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What was that? Are you responding now? Do you support developments along Stirling Highway?

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Do you support developments along Marine Parade, Leader of the Liberal Party?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Education, and member for Mount Lawley! Minister, can I ask you to respond more directly to the question you were asked, please.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think it is important. I mean, the whole basis of the leadership of the previous Leader of the Liberal Party was to oppose all developments. Liberal and National Party members come in here and say we need more housing, but they oppose every housing development. The way to get housing is to get housing developments.

Dr D.J. Honey: You just want houses for millionaires.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What was that?

Dr D.J. Honey: You just want houses for millionaires; that's all you want.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is already a very long question time.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: One thing you do not do, member for Vasse, is continue to interject while the Speaker is speaking. Most people in here have learnt that. I have had to draw this to your attention before now. When the Speaker interrupts the proceedings, I expect silence, from you in particular. Minister, I ask you to hopefully move along. We have had a very small number of questions today and they have taken a very long time. Member for Cottesloe, you have not assisted because every time the minister gets about three or four more words out, you do the same interjection over again, and then everybody else interjects again. We are not making much progress here. We could be in question time until about half past three at this point.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will wrap it up. It is important for the new Liberal leader to outline whether the Liberal Party supports housing developments and diversity.