

HOMELESSNESS — CENSUS DATA

**173. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to census data released today that highlights that Western Australia has had a 114 per cent increase in the number of people living in improvised dwellings or tents or sleeping out under the minister's watch. What comfort can the minister provide the now 2 300 people who are sleeping rough in Western Australia, given that the Northern Territory, Victoria and New South Wales all managed to reduce the number of rough sleepers, irrespective of COVID, over the same period?

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

I thank the member for the question.

I have said on the public record that Western Australia, like every other state, faces significant housing pressure and challenges, and that we have a tight rental market. That rental market is reflected in every state in this country. What the Leader of the Liberal Party has omitted or failed to say from that data is that Western Australia has the lowest rate of homelessness in the country at 37 per 10 000 people. It is the lowest rate of homelessness in the country. Also, the data showed that the boost to transitional accommodation beds was 143 per cent. That is two pieces of data that the opposition omits. I can point to the huge investment that we are making into homelessness. This year \$225 million is funding more than 130 organisations in Western Australia. I last year announced new initiatives, boosting homelessness outreach to seven days a week in the city, a new 100 homes program for helping rough sleepers off the street and also purchasing the Murray Street lodge. When I made those announcements, I know and noticed that it was welcomed strongly by the homelessness sector. In fact, one leading advocacy group said that there was momentum behind our policy changes. I note that when I made those announcements, the opposition attacked them. It does not support me buying a hotel for transitional accommodation and it does not support the 100 homes program, so what does it support? I cannot tell members, because it has no policies.