

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

344. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Treasurer:

I refer to the McGowan government's effort to protect the local construction industry through both stamp duty rebates for off-the-plan apartments and its proposed planning reforms. Can the Treasurer outline to the house why these initiatives are so important in supporting the local economy through the COVID-19 pandemic?

Mr B.S. WYATT replied:

I thank the member for Belmont for that very, very good question. In the just over three years that we have been in government, a lot of effort has gone into supporting jobs, a lot of effort has gone into supporting the construction sector, and not a budget has gone by that has not had something to try to encourage the housing industry amongst others, commercial and residential, back into a period of growth. Along the way, I must admit, some of that has been quite difficult. At every point, I have had complaint and critique from the Western Australian Liberal Party, to the point where sometimes I do not know who they are. When I try to cut taxes, I get yelled at. When we have a tight wages policy, I get yelled at. When we reduce government departments, I get yelled at. When we have a jobs target, the shadow Treasurer calls it a scam and I get yelled at. I do not know who they are, but I need them to know who they are. Yesterday, I was delighted when the member for Bateman, the shadow Treasurer, had an opinion piece published in *The West Australian*. It gave me the chance after three years to try to work out who the WA Liberal Party is. I was very interested in one paragraph in particular. The member for Bateman said —

We must also simplify government red and green tape to support and grow WA industry and encourage business investment.

That is a great idea! That is exactly what we need! Indeed, just yesterday, the Minister for Planning, who can only be described as the Muhammad Ali of planning reform, dropped into Parliament I think one of the most significant reform proposals it has seen in a long time that would do that very thing—simplify government red and green tape to support WA industry and encourage business investment. The Minister for Planning, as we all know, is not shy about taking on a fight. She is not shy about entering the ring, whether it be budget fights or here in the chamber itself.

I suspect she was intending to absorb a few punches yesterday, but did not realise it was going to be a bit of a rope-a-dope performance. My friend the member for Cottesloe—the George Foreman of yesterday's fight—wandered down to the lectern and said a number of things of some interest, I must admit. He not only strongly critiqued the urgency of the legislation, but actually went further —

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I am curious about whether the Treasurer is about to quote from an uncorrected *Hansard*.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am quoting from my notes. I am quoting from the extensive notes that I took yesterday, member for Dawesville.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr B.S. WYATT: Not only did he say that there is no demand for anything, but “Mr Foreman” went on to say this —

The SPEAKER: Member!

Mr B.S. WYATT: I apologise.

The SPEAKER: Please use the member for Cottesloe.

Mr B.S. WYATT: The member for Cottesloe went even further to say, I quote, “No building of commercial properties will be required because those existing premises are available.” Not only is the shadow Treasurer saying we must simplify red and green tape—the key point is when. It is at some point in the future when there is demand for those construction activities. I was very surprised to see the Liberal Party take that position. Clearly, to free up that 80 to 85 per cent of the economy that is the private sector, the government needs to get out of the way.

Again, I do not know who the Liberal Party is. We need to ensure that the private sector can spend and has confidence that its decisions will be supported by government quickly and efficiently and that they will get through. I assure members that the Minister for Planning's reforms will do those very things. I know the Liberal Party can do it; I saw it on Tuesday night when we debated some very good reforms in the Procurement Bill. I say to all members of the Liberal Party: Get on board. I think you know it is the right thing to do; there are just gonna be some digestion problems along the way.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

