

SOCIAL HOUSING

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

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant investment in delivering more social housing across Western Australia. Can the minister update the house on the number of homes that were added to the state's social housing stock in the last final financial year, and can the minister outline to the house how many social housing homes are planned to be delivered in the next couple of years?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for his question. As I have said many times in this house, our government has made a record investment injection into social housing in Western Australia of \$875 million, with \$2.4 billion over four years. We have faced an incredibly challenging market. As I have put on the record multiple times, in this COVID world, with large numbers of people either making Western Australia home or returning home, we have a booming economy, large demand for housing and a heated construction market. That is why, as I have said in this chamber, we are using every lever we can to deliver additional social housing—that includes timber frame homes, as we are knocking them out from concrete pours in four months. Speaking to those in the construction sector indicates that this is an incredible turnaround time.

We are also doing the modular program. The Minister for Health is right: I love modular! Modular is particularly great for the regions. Contrary to the member for Cottesloe's attacks on modular, it is very much a growing industry in Western Australia, and we have a dedicated modular program for regional Western Australia. We are spot purchasing at a rapid rate. We are converting old row housing that is surplus to needs into social housing. I am really pleased to say that in the last financial year, we added 600 homes to the system, despite the significant construction market challenges that we faced. We are still doing it right now, with another 860 homes under contract and under construction. So we are getting on with the job. On top of that, we are trying to grow the community housing sector by providing direct grants—that includes 173 additional homes being created through those direct grants. On homelessness, in the last financial year, we added 102 extra crisis beds to the system.

Despite all the challenges we face and despite our heated construction market, the message is very clear: as the homelessness sector knows and as the housing sector knows, this government is open and doing everything it can to drive and boost social housing supply in Western Australia.