

SOCIAL HOUSING — STOCK

93. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the minister's comments yesterday noting this government's investment of \$2.4 billion in social housing and homelessness and his recent media release claiming that the government has delivered an additional 1 000 social housing homes, noting there were 43 759 social housing properties at the end of 2017, yet figures received from the other place show there were 43 458 as of 31 January 2023.

- (1) How can the minister claim any additional social housing stock when the government's own figures show there are 300 fewer homes than when it came to government?
- (2) Does the minister admit his media release is deliberately misleading?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the member for her question. We do have a significant investment —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: Can I answer the question or would you like to continue to interject?

We are investing \$2.4 billion to create 3 300 homes in our social housing system. I have regularly reported. In fact, yesterday I clearly spelt out all the reforms that we are undertaking. We have added 1 000 homes to the system—that is true.

I have always been on the public record that we also face a considerable challenge—that is, ageing stock. As a result of that ageing stock, we lose houses out of the system. There are a variety of reasons for that. They are so old that they cannot be refurbished and brought into the system or we have high concentrations of social housing and there have been very deliberate and clear decisions to destock. The case in point is Brownlie Towers, which everyone agrees produced terrible social housing outcomes. I do not shy away from the fact that we have made some very difficult decisions, and there are more difficult decisions to come. Actually, I clearly outlined that challenge at the Urban Development Institute of Australia. Whether it is North Beach, Beaconsfield or Spalding in Geraldton, we are making very tough decisions on whether we save a house or we consider the broader social implications. I can tell members that the Geraldton community in Spalding strongly supports the new renewal program. For a simple decision to extend a road to address antisocial behaviour, some homes at the end of their life were demolished. This is a reality of being the Minister for Housing and making those decisions. But it is absolutely true that through all the reforms that I have listed we have added a thousand homes in terms of social housing delivery in Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: Before the member asks her supplementary, I believe she used the words “deliberately misleading” in her question. Of course, if you would like to use words like that, you need to do it by way of a substantive motion. That potentially should have been ruled out of order.