

REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES — HOUSING

**598. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to the remote communities across Western Australia that remain in limbo more than a month after the federal government walked away from providing vital funding to these vulnerable Western Australians. Can the minister update the house on how the current crisis within the Liberal Party has thrown those communities into further uncertainty and whether this crisis has affected this government's resolve in fighting for these communities?

**Mr P.C. TINLEY replied:**

Before I answer the question, I acknowledge Mattie Turnbull and planning students from Curtin University in the gallery, and, on behalf of the member for Bassendean, members of the East Beechboro Primary School parents and citizens association. Welcome to the chamber.

Similar to the many ministers around the country in my particular role, I am today in some form of flux or state of confusion as to where our bilateral arrangements are sitting with the commonwealth and who I am to deal with. We are ringing—there is no answer. We are being referred to different offices—to the wrong office. We do not know who we need to speak to to progress the agenda of Western Australia and ensure that we are looking after all Western Australians, and no more so than those in remote communities. Along with the Treasurer and the Premier, I have been on my feet in this place many times to talk about the 165 communities right across the state, one-third of the continent of Australia, from here to the South Australian border, that are the residences of nearly 11 000 first nation Western Australians. They are in limbo today now more than ever because of the indolence of the federal government and its lack of care for what we see as the responsibility of all Australians, not least of which the federal government, which decided as of June this year to walk away from a 50-year relationship with the remote and Indigenous communities of Western Australia.

The issue of federal support for housing was a challenging subject for the previous Barnett government and it is no less a challenge for the McGowan government. However, we will not roll over and have our tummies tickled with a one-off payment of 30 silver coins just to hand over a termination payment for the continued support of those, as was done by the previous government. Since I received the portfolio and the challenge, I have been calling for the opposition to collectively take up the fight with Canberra, and in the spirit of bipartisanship I acknowledge the member for Warren–Blackwood for his recent positive commentary in support of this. Well done. One member of the opposition has decided to take up the fight for all Western Australians and reclaim some of the ground that they have lost, potentially as being a member of the party for the regions. I look forward to the member for Warren–Blackwood's continued and increasing volume of support. I look forward to that in writing, when he writes to the new Minister for Indigenous Affairs, whoever that may be. I reckon a call from the member for Warren–Blackwood to Canberra will be answered given that his national colleagues are sitting alongside their Liberal counterparts in the coalition looking rather bemused and wondering what is going to happen and how it is going to land. The Premier is absolutely resolute—he will not entertain any compromised deal on this issue. There is a \$400 million hole in the forward estimates to support first nation Western Australians—a \$400 million hole. The Prime Minister—well, one of the Prime Ministers!—wrapped himself around Closing the Gap Refresh and embodied it as his own personal mission to achieve those outcomes. Where are we on remotes? We are very close to a GST solution, but it has now gone; it has vaporised. We cannot hope to meet the requirements of constructing 1 300 new dwellings over the next 10 years to attend to population growth and overcrowding if the state Parliament is dysfunctional on this issue. I look to the Leader of the Opposition for leadership, something that seems to be lacking in Canberra, to take up the fight for all Western Australians.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to remind those opposite that their very party was founded on the ideals—it is not often that I reference conservatives—of the arch conservative Menzies, who, in his 1942 speech, identified the forgotten people. There are 11 000 forgotten people sitting out there in the desert looking for access to their cultural land and their birthright, and they are being denied by the opposition's paternalism. Get on the job.