

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY

**567. Mr J.M. FRANCIS to the Minister for Housing:**

Can the minister please update the house on the implementation of the government's affordable housing strategy?

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL replied:**

That is a very good question. I was down the member for Jandakot's way this morning at a place called Stella Orion, which is just around the back of Cockburn Central. That is where the member for Cockburn's electorate office is, if he knows the way down there. It is a bit south of Swanbourne, but anyway —

**Mr F.M. Logan:** By the way, did you actually tell them that you were there?

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** It is my pleasure. I love to share the love.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** That's about as much courtesy as you've got.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** That is all right.

It was very interesting. Stella Orion is a great development, and in so many ways it is a great example of how the Department of Housing is transforming away from a focus on just social housing to affordability, and is increasingly focused on building partnerships with the private sector and the not-for-profit sector. As an example, at Stella Orion the state invested \$23.2 million, and we purchased 78 units as part of a large private development. Of those 78 units, 52 have been sold either back into the private sector or through shared equity as affordable housing outcomes. Twenty-six have been kept, and they have been transferred to the community housing sector. The sale of the units yielded \$19 million, which is now being reinvested in more social and affordable housing. It is a great outcome and we should all applaud it. I have found only one public figure in Western Australia who opposed Stella Orion, and that was the member for Cockburn.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** I didn't oppose it.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** The member opposed it when it was announced.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** I just said, "Be very careful with the way you go about doing it"; that's all.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** Okay. Let me quote what the member is reported to have said in the newspaper. That is what the member thinks he said. Let me tell him what he said —

"When it comes to public housing there are plenty of places around where a mixed public housing development can take place, not among a planned private housing development."

In other words, the member for Cockburn, the great nimby of the southern suburbs, is the only person who does not want good, affordable housing outcomes delivered in his electorate. Does the member want us to build them in Swanbourne, up the road in Brassey Street? Does he want us to do that?

**Mr F.M. Logan:** Why don't you talk to the people who live in Stella Orion and who have invested in their apartments and see what they say? You didn't knock on their doors. You should have asked them.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** I am telling the member that it is a very, very successful development. The member should go down and have a look at it. It is just the other side of his electorate office. When he gets out of the car occasionally, he should turn right and not left and he will see it down there. But let us move on —

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, take a seat.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** You didn't attend the public meeting, did you?

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Cockburn, I know you have been dragged into this.

**Mr F.M. Logan:** And I have.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no need to respond to me, member for Cockburn. What I am going to indicate to both you, member for Cockburn, and to you, Minister for Housing, is that this is not acceptable practice during question time. Minister for Housing, I am going to urge you to continue with your remarks. Member for Cockburn, I am going to ask you to cease interjecting.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** I was actually down there to talk about a new shared equity program that the government has launched called SharedStart. It is fantastic. I want to say in relation to Stella Orion that the quality of built form there that has been provided to community housing—social housing clients and for affordable housing is

outstanding. I was truly inspired by what I saw this morning and what the department has done in delivering those outcomes.

SharedStart means that over the next couple of years the Department of Housing will sell up to 2 000 properties to Western Australians on low incomes—below \$70 000 for a single and \$90 000 for a couple—in this shared equity scheme. We will provide between 20 and 30 per cent of the equity, and the private, low-income Western Australian citizen will purchase the rest, funded by Keystart. It is a fantastic initiative, and next week those houses —

**Mr P. Papalia:** It sounds like a Labor idea that you've changed.

**Mr T.R. BUSWELL:** It is completely different. Next week those properties will go onto the website, and up to 2 000 Western Australians will be able to purchase them over the next two years. It is extremely popular. Already 400 people have pre-registered their interest with Keystart, and I think that is an indication of the extent of the affordability assistance that this will provide to those people. It will help them get over that affordability hurdle, firstly, by providing land and housing at a lower capital cost and, secondly, by providing finance through Keystart. It is a great initiative. Our estimates are that the average package will be around \$325 000. With 2 000 of them, there will be \$640 million of investment in housing and land in Western Australia. At a time when the construction sector in the residential industry, in particular, is struggling, this will be a welcome boost that has a direct economic benefit to those people, and it will provide an affordable housing outcome.

How does this compare with the former Labor scheme? I will tell members. This is strictly targeted to new dwelling construction. In what area do we need to assist in Western Australia? It is bringing dwellings onto the market. It is not simply enabling people to pick up *The Sunday Times* or *The Weekend West* on the weekend, pick a house and go and buy it, and the government will take an equity position; this is highly targeted to new developments—but, more importantly, new, innovative developments—in which the Department of Housing is involved from an equity position.

Some time ago we announced an aspirational goal in housing, and that was to build 20 000 affordable houses by 2020. I can report to the house that innovations like this, and innovations and partnerships like the ones I saw at Stella Orion, notwithstanding the opposition of the member for Cockburn this morning, are the types of initiatives that will see us deliver on that aspirational goal in spades.