

GOVERNMENT REGIONAL OFFICERS' HOUSING

**114. Ms L. DALTON to the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting local jobs in regional Western Australia by expanding worker accommodation, in particular, in the midwest and Gascoyne regions.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on this government's significant investment in Government Regional Officers' Housing as well as the release of land worker accommodation?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how this will benefit the towns and communities in this region?

**Mr J.N. CAREY replied:**

I thank the member for her question.

- (1)–(2) We know we are in extraordinary times, facing a global pandemic. This has meant pressures across Australia's housing market. Across Australia, we are facing the demand for skilled labour, supply chain issues, and, of course, more Australians are returning home and also returning home to Western Australia. We, like all states, are not immune to the pressures, but we are doing everything we can right now to tackle both housing and land supply. Our building bonus grant, as we know, is already delivering a huge new supply of housing in both metropolitan and regional Western Australia: 27 000 metropolitan building approvals and 4 000 regional building approvals. We are also focused on land supply through the \$116 million regional land booster program, which has released around 400 industrial and residential lots. We also understand that land is critical to enabling local economies to grow in regional Western Australia but, particularly, releasing land for worker accommodation. I am really proud to be the Minister for Lands; Housing helping to drive this program and to work with local government. We were already delivering on election commitments. We have worked closely with the Shire of Northampton to identify an appropriate location. Last week we released a registration of interest to the market to identify a suitable proponent to develop the land for worker accommodation. We know that this is needed in Kalbarri, not just right now but into the future, and it will help to grow this economic centre. We have already released a registration of interest for worker accommodation in Exmouth. Again, we worked with the Shire of Exmouth and the Gascoyne Development Commission, and they are working through that now to identify a preferred proponent. In fact, I met with the Shire of Exmouth today. As a minister, I make myself very accessible to local governments. We talked about other options to develop temporary or permanent worker accommodation and general land supply in Exmouth.

The government is now investing around \$200 million to maintain, improve and expand Government Regional Officers' Housing in Western Australia. They are popping up everywhere. We have 17 new GROH properties currently under construction, with another 35 properties being planned. We have purchased 27 new homes for GROH, with negotiations for a further 10. In the Gascoyne and the midwest, we have begun construction of two GROH properties in Carnarvon. We are making a concerted effort to invest in both land and housing supply so that we can grow those regional communities, but we are also looking to the future, when the boom will recede, by using our social housing fund and the housing diversity pipeline to create further work, further jobs and further housing and land supply.