

SOCIAL HOUSING — MODULAR BUILD PROGRAM — REGIONS

627. Ms E.J. KELSIE to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant investment in delivering more social housing across Western Australia, particularly in the regions. Can the minister update the house on the modular build program and outline how this program is helping deliver new housing as fast as possible across our regions?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for her question.

It is very clear that all states across Australia are facing significant housing pressures. A direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic is that a number of factors have coincided, creating the demand for more housing in Western Australia. As a state government, despite the very heated construction market, we have been going out of our way to not only use every lever we can, but also think outside the box. We understand that in the current market, it can take 12 to 18 months to deliver a double-brick home. That is the reality we face in Western Australia.

We are investing \$2.4 billion over the next four years in housing and homelessness programs, but there has been a greater focus on and energy in alternative construction methods. To date, as a result of adopting those methods, we have added 743 social homes, with 900 under contract or construction. In this challenging market, we have found that these alternative methods are certainly working. We are using timber frame construction. It is not a novelty on the east coast but it is here. We are finding that we are able to knock out social homes four months from the concrete pour. We are also using other types of prefab homes to create smaller homes and units in the metropolitan area.

We have also created a modular build program. That will deliver 200 homes, with the majority in regional Western Australia. Why that works and why it is faster is because we can build much of it onsite, but obviously transport it to a regional community where the last elements are completed. We are finding that it has a quicker turnaround time. I am pleased to say that, to date, we now have 73 modular homes under contract, and they are starting to be delivered out the door. We have had five delivered to South Hedland, we have had four delivered to Tom Price and I am glad to say that we have some under contract and they will be going to Manjimup.

This shows that our government recognises that we face the toughest construction market in decades, that we are shifting and moving to adapt to the market and that our timber frame and modular programs are delivering to accelerate social housing delivery in Western Australia.