

HOUSING — LONG-TERM RENTAL INCENTIVE

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

I refer to the Cook Labor government's approach to unlocking more housing across Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how new measures introduced by this government, such as the short-term rental accommodation incentive scheme, will boost housing supply across the state?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house if he is aware of anyone who opposes these important reforms to increase housing supply?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for her question. I also want to acknowledge it is Pride Month and we had Fairday on the weekend. The Premier visited Pride Fairday and I also hosted the dog show, and I am proud to say that Joan Crawford won the dog show over Doggy Parton.

Point of Order

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It is the same thing.

The SPEAKER: Sorry?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: In relation to the earlier point of order regarding the member for Cottesloe, this is a similar scenario. Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, just to be clear, I give the rulings here. There are certain rules for the asking of questions. There is a certain amount of latitude to ministers in answering a question. Although the comments by the Minister for Housing were not directly addressing the question, I anticipate that he has finished those comments. They were brief and he was not asking a question, so the same order does not apply. A bit of latitude is given. I remind ministers not to take too much latitude.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr J.N. CAREY: I am glad the member for Roe has a sense of humour!

- (1)–(2) I have watched the response of a range of stakeholders to our announcements last week, particularly those around the regulation of short-term rentals. I note that across the board, from the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia to the Australian Hotels Association and other stakeholders, there has been an overwhelming recognition that this is another step as part of a range of measures to help boost housing supply. I note the AHA's Bradley Woods said on the record —

We believe that the financial incentives that are being made available will help entice some hosts to return their property to the long-term housing market ...

He is right. I am pleased to report that already that the Consumer Protection division has received 90 expressions of interest relating to 105 properties. Since our announcement last week, 90 people have indicated that they could be interested in the \$10 000 incentive grant to change their property over. As the Minister for Commerce said at the time, even if we get 20, 30 or 50, if that means that a house moves across from the short-term rental market and provides a home to vulnerable Western Australians, that should be congratulated.

I note that regional local governments deeply appreciated our nuanced approach. We gave this very strong consideration and we understood that a 90-day threshold could water down existing rules by regional local governments. The City of Busselton said that it welcomed the announcement —

... new regulations for un-hosted short-term rental accommodation in Western Australia, along with an incentive aimed at returning some properties to the long-term rental market, are a positive step forward to introducing a State-wide balance ...

It also said —

The proposed incentive to encourage short-stay property owners to consider transitioning their property to the long-term market is consistent with the Council's formal position ...

The City of Busselton strongly welcomed our announcement to help boost housing supply. The Shire of Augusta–Margaret River also said —

The Shire has been advocating for these outcomes for some time, as it means holiday homes can be managed by the Shire, in a way that is best for our community.

It might shock members that there was one negative voice. In fact, there were two negative voices. The first, Hon Steven Martin, attacked it as a short-term shuffle. The honourable member has not yet released one housing policy. His only housing policy solution to date was given on radio in a thought bubble when he said, “I think we could do more maintenance.” Then we have Louise “kill the whales” Kingston, who said this, and this shows members how out of touch the Nationals WA are, how out of touch —

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Minister, that was unparliamentary.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I withdraw that.

The SPEAKER: That is not how you refer to a member of the upper house.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr J.N. CAREY: Hon Louise Kingston is so out of touch with regional local communities, the City of Busselton and the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River, that she said, “They’re essentially paying off owners of short-stay accommodation to take their properties off the tourism market.” Yes. That is what we are aiming to do. Yes. We are doing exactly what regional local governments like Busselton and Augusta–Margaret River want. The Nationals WA, who claim they are in touch with regional communities, are arguing against the position of regional local governments in Western Australia, which are saying that we need to regulate Airbnbs. They are not worrying about the potential impacts on their tourism markets because they want to see a boost to housing supply and they are best placed to regulate their markets.

Again, we see this clear line between the Liberals and Nationals, who are completely out of touch when it comes to housing supply issues, and this side of government, which is working with local governments to help boost local housing supply in Western Australia.