

Government Question on Notice

No. 1

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

Queenslanders who are on low incomes sometimes need help paying their bills. With reference to page 3-10 of the SDS what is the Department of Communities doing to help ease the cost of living?

ANSWER

In 2010-11, the Bligh Government spent increased funding of over \$1.3 billion on concessions, discounts and rebates across government to help Queenslanders meet the cost of living pressures.

This is the most comprehensive concession package of any State or Territory.

It includes over 970,000 concession services provided to eligible pensioners, seniors and veterans in Queensland to help with the cost of electricity, gas, motor vehicle and boat registration, dental, spectacles supply, medical aids, electricity life support, fishing permits and public transport including local rail, bus and ferry travel and long-distance travel within Queensland.

There is no income or asset test applied for Seniors Card eligibility; anyone over 65 years and working less than 35 hours a week can obtain a Seniors Card and save money.

Residents also qualify for a Seniors Card if they are between the ages of 60 and 65, do not work full-time and hold a current Commonwealth concession card, including those who hold a low-income Health Care Card.

The number of concessions available to Queensland seniors card holders is more than double that provided in the southern states including New South Wales and Victoria.

In 2010-11, the Bligh Government spent \$104 million on the Electricity Rebate Scheme which helped over 522,000 pensioner and seniors households to keep their lights on.

In addition, \$44 million spent on the Pensioner Rates Subsidy Scheme helped over 250,000 pensioner home owner households.

The Bligh Government understands that every dollar counts, especially for vulnerable Queenslanders living on fixed incomes.

For example, a retired married couple, both over 65 years of age and living in their own home but living on the pension can access:

- more than \$600 a year in savings just to maintain their home with electricity, gas, rates and water
- over a \$1000 towards medical costs—depending on their needs, and in addition to free dental, free prescription glasses, some free medical aids and free pharmaceuticals (when issued by a public hospital)
- 50% off motor vehicle registration, boat registration and public transport plus four free long distance rail journeys each year.

To help Queenslanders know what help is available and identify what they might be eligible for, the Bligh Government established the Every Dollar Counts website; www.qld.gov.au/everydollarcounts is a one stop shop that provides information on every rebate and concession available through the Queensland Government.

Every Dollar Counts booklets are widely distributed and are available at local and federal government offices, community health centres and public libraries.

Copies of the booklet can be obtained by phoning 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or by email request to concessions@smartservice.qld.gov.au.

Government Question on Notice

No. 2

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

Some low income earners need support to move into homes in the private market. With reference to pages 3-6 and 3-7 of the SDS what innovative subsidies and programs are the Queensland and Australian Governments providing to help Queenslanders move into homes in the private market?

ANSWER

The Bligh Government knows that many families are doing in tough, and sometimes they need a helping hand to make sure there is a home to come home to each night.

By 30 June of 2010-11, we had helped over 205,000 households to stay in the private rental market. This is more than 20,000 over our original 2010-11 target, and demonstrates the hard work and commitment of this Government, the staff of the Department of Communities and funded community organisations to help people in need, particularly during our summer of natural disasters.

As at 30 June 2011, 50,563 bond loans had been provided, so that the need to deposit four weeks rent isn't a barrier to securing a lease. There were also 2,873 rental grants given to Queenslanders in high need to help them pay cover the cost of a couple of weeks rent, to help them secure or sustain a tenancy at risk.

Almost 4,000 households were assisted through the innovative RentConnect service, where Housing staff help households in need locate affordable housing in their local area, or maintain a tenancy that is at risk.

Each of these instances of assistance means a great deal to the recipients, to a mother stressed by the fear she won't be able to find a place to rent that she needs to keep the kids in school. Each one of them is an early intervention, helping families and people under pressure with support they need to get through a period of crisis or difficulty.

The Bligh Government is also making sure that there is more affordable rental accommodation. We are expecting over 11,000 National Rental Affordability Scheme incentives to be approved for Queensland. Each one is a commitment by the Queensland and Commonwealth to jointly subsidise new privately built rental accommodation for 10 years, to ensure it is leased at least 20% below market rents.

In the 2011-12 financial year, we estimate an additional 3,000 NRAS rental properties will be constructed and available for tenanting. This is a win-win innovation, as each NRAS incentive results in a newly constructed home. Each one is locked in as affordable rental housing for low to moderate income households. Each one supports our construction industry during tough times, and each one provides much needed jobs and economic activity across Queensland, including in areas of need such as Cairns and the Gold Coast.

NRAS is part of a Government-wide commitment that supports construction of residential housing in Queensland, with the announcement in the 2011-12 Budget of the Housing Boost, a \$10,000 grant to new homes built between 1 August 2011 and 1 February 2012.

Government Question on Notice

No. 3

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 3-7 of the SDS what has been the result of State and Federal Governments investment in new social housing and how has this helped Queenslanders in need.

ANSWER

The Bligh Government has been working determinedly to deliver one of the most significant social housing builds since the Chifley Government following World War II. I am pleased to report we are on track to finish on time, under budget, and we are delivering high quality new housing to those Queenslanders who most need our help.

Since 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2011, we have increased the social housing portfolio by over 5,200 social housing units and maintained well over 30,000 existing homes. These properties are distributed all over the state.

These new homes has been made possible by the Queensland Government's \$500 million investment from the Future Growth Fund into new social housing, with \$90 million spent in 2010-11, and \$60M committed for 2011-12. The build also includes over 2,700 of the 4,000 homes to be built by June 2012 as a result of the \$1.16 billion investment by the Commonwealth Government through the Nation Building and Jobs Plan—Social Housing Initiative. The massive maintenance program was also funded through an \$80 million investment as part of the Nation Building and Jobs Plan. The last of these repairs were completed in the early months of the 2010-11 financial year.

The fact that this build is on track in spite of the summer of natural disasters is truly remarkable, and a tribute to the hard work by Department of Communities staff, community housing organisations, the Department of Public Works and our construction industry partners.

This build has supported thousands of construction or industry-related jobs to every region of Queensland each year for the past three years. In 2010-11, it created an estimated 3,881 full time equivalent Queensland jobs.

Our hard work continues, and this financial year we will build more than 1,800 social housing dwellings, supporting an estimated 3,700 jobs.

The investment in social housing has included significant growth in the community housing sector. In the 2010-11 financial year, \$165.9 million has been provided as capital grants to registered community and local government housing organisations, including Indigenous Councils, to build new and upgrade existing social housing. A further \$326.5 million will be given in capital grants this financial year as part of the Queensland Government's efforts to develop the capacity of community housing providers to become growth providers, who can leverage their assets and take advantage of tax exemptions to build new social housing. Also included in this funding are capital grants for Indigenous communities to continue building and upgrading social housing.

This social housing has also provided much needed adaptable social housing. Queenslanders with a disability make up more than 60 per cent of tenants allocated new social housing built through the Nation Building and Jobs Plan.

Government Question on Notice

No. 4

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

After the worst natural disasters in Australia's history the Queensland Government is working alongside Queenslanders to rebuild the physical and emotional wellbeing of the state and its people. With reference to page 3-3 of the SDS what is the Department of Communities doing to help get people's lives back on track?

ANSWER

Six months on from the natural disasters the Bligh Government remains committed to working with Queenslanders to help them rebuild their lives.

As of last week, the Government in partnership with the Australian Government has paid over \$20 million in Emergent Assistance Grants, over \$15 million in Essential Household Grants and finalised nearly \$4 million in Structural Assistance Grants and paid more than \$1.5 million under the Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme.

We know people are still doing it tough and that is why Community Recovery Referral and Information Centres in some of the worst hit areas of the state will remain open until December. The centres help people to lodge and follow up grant applications, provide emotional and support services and assist with accommodation options.

The Department of Communities, as the agency responsible for Community Recovery, continues to work alongside partner organisations and the community to rebuild lives. During the height of the natural disasters, over 3,000 departmental staff were deployed to work across the state in community recovery. For many this meant leaving their homes and families behind to work on the front line.

The department continues to help house people in social housing, rental properties as medium term transitional housing and the placement of manufactured homes and caravans in areas of need.

To help alleviate some of the financial pressure on impacted families, the department suspended rent arrears payments and debt collection, implemented an amnesty on rent increases to new household members and provided rent relief.

To help people move into the private rental market, the department's RentConnect officers provided 1,518 RentConnect services to assist households find and secure a home to rent in the private market, including practical assistance to search and apply for private rental. The department also provided approximately 5,550 bond loans and 1,035 rental grants in disaster-affected postcode areas as at 30 June 2011.

Earlier this year, the Premier and the Prime Minister announced a \$39 million Community Recovery and Wellbeing Package to support the recovery and wellbeing of communities, families and individuals across the state.

The package includes \$20 million for community development and recovery including intensive support to the most highly impacted communities through the employment of community development officers and funding to help local governments, in consultation with their community, develop local area plans to aid recovery.

In addition, the package provides \$5.8 million over three years for financial counselling to help people to plan how to overcome their financial concerns.

\$10 million has also been provided to mental health services and \$2 million for disabilities care plan to help services delivery crises accommodation and respite care for people with a disability.

As at 14 July 2011, the department has also provided \$1.498 million in funding to non-government organisations to help them provide assistance to people affected by the disasters. These organisations are providing access to short and long-term alternative housing, information and referrals and linking people to recovery services including legal and financial counselling services.

Other support available to Queenslanders includes the Premier's Relief Fund which is being administered by the Department of Communities. As at 17 July 2011, the Premier's Relief Fund has paid out approximately \$199.3 million to more than 30,000 individuals and households in Queensland to help them cover their rehousing or recovery needs.

Government Question on Notice

No. 5

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 3-6 of the SDS, what action is the Department of Communities taking to house the homeless?

ANSWER

Housing the homeless is a seven day a week, 365 day a year commitment for the Bligh Government. While many people's mind turns to the issue of homelessness at Christmas, or in response to positive awareness raising events like the CEO Sleepout, the hard work of finding housing for homeless Queenslanders and supporting them to maintain this housing is occurring every day and night. This work is carried out by the specialist homelessness non-government organisations, who provide crisis accommodation and outreach as well as essential support. It is also carried out by Department of Communities Housing staff, who find crisis housing and long term social housing for Queenslanders in housing stress.

The Queensland Government and Federal Government together have invested \$284.6 million over five years, with the Bligh Government providing the greater share at \$149.5 million. These funds have been invested with a clear plan and targets to halve homelessness by 2020.

In 2011-12, we are investing \$85.2 million into 213 specialist homelessness services to provide accommodation and support to people experiencing homelessness across the state.

Funding for accommodation and support to young homeless people has grown to \$22.97 million for 68 specialist services. Additionally, under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, \$4.312 million has been provided for six Youth Housing and Reintegration Services established in Inala, Townsville, Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Mount Isa and Hervey Bay.

Non-government organisations funded under the Youth Housing and Reintegration Services deliver case management, brokerage, accommodation and support to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, aged 12–20 years and are:

- exiting youth detention centres; and/or
- exiting or transitioning from Child Safety orders; or
- 'sleeping rough' or have been living in unstable or temporary housing.

One of our most successful programs is the Street to Home initiative delivering services that support rough sleepers into long term housing, operating in Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns and the Gold Coast, as well as a rural service to be announced shortly. These services will receive \$2.5 million funding in the 2011-12 financial year. Already, this program has achieved real results, with 464 high needs rough sleepers assisted in first nine months of the 2010-11 financial year.

Our response to homelessness has involved more than just record investment. It has involved real solutions to homelessness, through a Housing First approach that national and international research has shown to have the greatest success rate at assisting those who are homeless get back into housing, stabilize their life, and become productive members of society, finding work or contributing as a volunteer.

This work is achieving real results. Over the last 12 months, we have placed into long term social housing approximately 2,500 people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. This has been possible because we've added over 5,200 new social housing dwellings in the last three years.

The Queensland Government's One Social Housing System is leading the country in prioritising social housing for those in greatest need. It is not a 'wait list', instead allocations to housing are made on the basis of need.

Government Question on Notice

No. 6

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

National and international research indicates that early intervention programs to support young people who may be on the wrong side of the law are often the best form of prevention. With reference to page 3-12 of the SDS what action is the Queensland Government taking to address youth criminal behaviour, to help get troubled young people back on track and keep our community safe?

ANSWER

The Bligh Government has implemented the toughest youth justice laws that Queensland has ever had. On 29 March 2010, the *Youth Justice Act 1992* was amended by Parliament to strengthen its approach to youth crime. The Courts' powers were widened to include placing youth offenders on curfews to reduce re-offending. Amendments also gave Police stronger powers to arrest young people who fail to complete Youth Justice Conferencing requirements and agreements, or a Drug Education and Assessment session, and who fail to attend court.

It's important that we intervene to get youth at risk of criminal behaviour back on track. The Queensland Government has implemented new effective programs that work. They are having real success helping troubled youth back into school or employment.

Some of the most important work is through early intervention programs that keep young people on track. Key among these is the Youth Support Coordinators initiative, a \$13.7 million initiative that involves 105 youth support coordinators and seven new Regional Youth Support Coordinators working in Queensland government and independent high schools, to help keep kids at school and engaged with learning. Studies show that remaining engaged with school and/or training is a key protective factor against offending.

In 2010, the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative (YSCI) achieved the following outcomes for young people accessing the program:

- 14.1 per cent of new cases were attending intermittently at start of contact with YSCI, but the figure had reduced to 3.7 per cent by end of contact;
- 6.3 per cent of new cases were not attending school at all at start of contact with YSCI, but this figure had reduced to 2.8 per cent by end of contact;
- 2.4 per cent of new cases were suspended at start of contact with YSCI, but this figure had reduced to 0.7 per cent by end of contact;
- 1.5 per cent of new cases were enrolled with TAFE at start of contact with YSCI, but this figure had increased to 2.6 per cent by end of contact.

In addition, youth support coordinators provided:

- 5,524 one-on-one instances of support to individual clients;
- 793 group projects in which young people developed skills that contributed to their engagement in education; and
- 554 community projects that supported systemic change for young people in relation to participation in education.

An example of the success of the youth support coordinators is a quote provided by a Principal. *"One student who was seriously disengaged worked with our YSC. Not only did she complete Year 12, she was our dux and is now undertaking part-time external study at university"* (Principal, eSMART Survey).

In the 2011-12 Budget, I was pleased to announce \$1.3 million each year for 2011-12 and 2012-13 to continue the Youth Opportunity Program in Far North Queensland, aimed at diverting Indigenous people from the youth justice system. This program is delivered by ACT for Kids and incorporates a Young Offender Community Response Service and Bail Support Service. It delivers culturally-appropriate support and intervention services to young people involved in the youth justice system.

A follow up of 92 young people who participated in the Youth Opportunities Project in 2008 and 2009 showed that 75 per cent did not reoffend within six months compared to 57 per cent of the control group. Of the 82 young people who could be followed for 12 months, 76 per cent did not reoffend compared to 52 per cent of the control group.

We are also achieving real results through Youth Justice Conferencing, a statutory youth justice service based on a restorative justice approach to working with victims, young people and their families. Trained convenors facilitate a meeting with a young person and those affected by their crime to reach an agreement about how the young person may make amends.

These conferences make young people come face-to-face with the harm their actions have done. They also provide victims and families with an opportunity to participate in decision-making and strengthen the young person's social and personal connections with family and community.

Police may divert young people from court by referring them to a conference. A court may also request that a youth justice conference takes place either instead of, or before, sentencing a young person.

In 2009-10, 2,513 referrals were made to youth justice conferencing, with 99 per cent of victims being satisfied with the outcome of the conference. Youth Justice Conferencing has \$9.8 million of funding to deliver Youth Justice Conferencing through 13 conferencing services in Queensland.

We are also having real success in intensive services working with young people and their families, such as The Next Step at Logan/Beenleigh, and a trial run in partnership by Professor Ronan and the Department of Communities in Rockhampton. The Next Step program's intensive case management approach has assisted 143 young people to achieve 70 per cent of goals they have set for themselves, including responsible parenting, not re-offending and gaining trade qualifications.

Through new and innovative programs implemented by the Bligh Government, we are helping young people get their lives back on track and rebuild relationships with their family and community. They are helping at risk young people become productive members of society, and are making our society safer.

Government Question on Notice

No. 7

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

The Queensland Government is committed to advancing women's economic independence, specifically women living in regional areas. With reference to page 3-17 of the SDS how is the Bligh Government's Women in Hard Hats program achieving outcomes for Queensland women?

ANSWER

The Bligh Government is committed to ensuring the women of Queensland are able to benefit from all the job opportunities our great state has to offer. One challenge for is the low representation of women in non-traditional, high paying industries.

The mining, energy and construction sectors are at the heart of Queensland's thriving economy yet these industries are struggling to attract and retain one of our greatest resources—Queensland's women. In Queensland, women make up just 16 per cent of the mining industry and 11 per cent of the construction industry. Furthermore, women only occupy 3.1 per cent and 1.9 per cent of technical and trades roles in these industries respectively.

Mining and resources projects being proposed at the moment are expected to support up to 140,000 jobs for Queenslanders over the next three years. In response, the Bligh Government continues to invest and promote the highly successful *Women in Hard Hats* program—a key platform of our *Advancing Queensland Women's Strategy*.

Women in Hard Hats encourages and assists women to enter jobs in non-traditional and emerging industries by: raising awareness of opportunities for women in non-traditional industries by promoting relevant education, training and career paths; and supporting attitudinal change among women, girls and employers through promotion, information and resources.

In 2010-11, the Office for Women facilitated the delivery of approximately 50 workshops, seminars and certificate courses that covered job readiness, mentoring and leadership training, board readiness, including career awareness for non-traditional employment opportunities and mining readiness.

Many of the *Women in Hard Hats* events were located in regional areas to ensure the accessibility of Office for Women activities and resources to women living outside the Brisbane region. Regional coordinators are located in the department's offices in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Maroochydore, Gold Coast/Logan, Ipswich and Toowoomba.

Increasing the representation of women in non-traditional, high paying industries will grow Queensland's economy, improving women's economic security and building a broader and stronger workforce.

Government Question on Notice

No. 8

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

The Queensland Government is undertaking the largest roll-out of new homes ever seen in remote Indigenous communities. With reference to page 3-4 of the SDS please provide an update on the progress of the build?

ANSWER

The Queensland Government is overseeing the rollout of more than 1,100 new homes and more than 1200 upgraded existing homes in the 14 remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait council areas.

This build is made possible through the Commonwealth investment in the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, which is managed and implemented by the Queensland Government.

The Queensland Government is also matching that investment to make sure the Indigenous communities of Yarrabah and Cherbourg are included in the program, with the Bligh Government spending \$56 million in 2010-11 and committing an additional \$73.7 million in 2011-12.

This 10-year build is greater than any previous decade, and marks the single greatest investment in housing in remote Indigenous communities. It also complements our state funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait housing of \$52 million.

The Remote Indigenous housing build is on target, with all 62 new dwellings and 425 refurbishments completed in 2010-11. These are inclusive of 37 new homes that were outstanding from the 2009-10 financial year, and demonstrate that we are delivering housing on time for these communities.

I am proud that this build has involved considerable negotiation with and the agreement of discrete communities, with all 14 Deed of Grant in Trust communities agreeing to the 40 year leases of the social housing to be built by the Queensland Government. This was a Commonwealth Government requirement, and it has been thanks to leadership and cooperation of Indigenous leaders and Department of Communities staff that build timetables have been met.

Building housing in these communities has involved much more than just the actual home. Vital infrastructure such as sewerage, water and power, roads and drains and telecommunications have all been planned and delivery has commenced. This has been a real challenge for communities, and I am pleased to announce the agreement between the Queensland and Commonwealth Government to redirect \$38 million in funds from within the partnership agreement, in addition to \$67 million provided by the Queensland Government to build essential infrastructure for new homes.

In the first 11 months of 2010-11, Queensland Government work in remote communities (excluding Cherbourg and Yarrabah) has created over 120,000 hours of work for local Indigenous people. More than 40 per cent of this work is being undertaken by local apprentices and trainees. The target of 20 per cent local Indigenous employment was exceeded, with 27 per cent local Indigenous employment being achieved. This 10-year program of work offers consistent work necessary for real apprenticeships and career progression, and real jobs for community members, building homes that their neighbours and family will receive lasting benefit from. These jobs will continue in 2011-12.

Government Question on Notice

No. 9

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

Domestic violence continues to have a terrible impact on families in Queensland. With reference to page 3-3 of the SDS what has the Queensland Government done to assist Queensland's women and children escaping domestic violence?

ANSWER

In 2010-11, the Bligh Government spent over \$190 million across government to respond to and reduce domestic and family violence including over 1,300 crisis accommodation dwellings, court support, counselling and perpetrator programs.

Queensland contributed to and is well placed to meet the requirements of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their children. The Bligh Government has demonstrated its commitment to addressing the issue of domestic and family violence with the launch in 2009 of *For our sons and daughters: A Queensland Government strategy to reduce domestic and family violence 2009-2014*.

Under this strategy, the Bligh Government committed to a number of key initiatives and we have delivered.

We have completed one of the most comprehensive reviews of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989* and will introduce legislative amendments to the Queensland Parliament later this year to strengthen support for victims and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

We established a panel to review domestic violence related deaths and have implemented its recommendation to create a Domestic Violence Death Review Unit. The Bligh Government has invested over \$340,000 to establish the unit within the State Coroner's office which will review all domestic and family violence-related homicides and suspected suicides over the past five years to identify systemic gaps in responding to domestic and family violence, and identify avenues for preventing future deaths.

In addition, in 2009 the Bligh Government provided \$2.7 million over 20 months for the *Breaking the Cycle of Domestic and Family Violence* trial in Rockhampton. Further funds of \$3.815 million to extend this pilot for a further two years were announced in the 2011-12 Budget. This integrated service delivery model includes resources for Legal Aid Queensland, a Court Coordinator and seven support services delivered by non-government organisations such as court support, intensive case management and perpetrator intervention programs.

An investment of \$330,000 in 2010-11 towards the Safety Upgrades Initiative trialled at Townsville, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast enabled victims of domestic and family violence to stay safe in their own homes with improved home security including changing locks, installing door and window locks, sensor lights and other support services.

Domestic and Family violence impacts on all communities and the Bligh Government's 'Act as 1' campaign is a call to action for neighbours, friends, family, work colleagues and community members to take a stand against domestic and family violence and support those affected.

In addition to posters and other resources, the campaign includes a Facebook presence which has enabled engagement of a new audience in a deeper involvement with domestic violence-related issues than traditional one-way communication such as press advertising as demonstrated by the 104,069 views posted on the site.

The Bligh Government does not tolerate any form of domestic and family violence and we urge all Queenslanders to 'Act as 1' against domestic and family violence.

Government Question on Notice

No. 10

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

Following the outpouring of generosity after Queensland's summer of natural disasters and with reference to page 3-2 of the SDS what is the Queensland Government doing to support volunteers and ensure the state is prepared for future events?

ANSWER

The generosity of Queenslanders shone through during our state's recent tough times. Following floods and cyclones, many Queenslanders felt alone, helpless and overwhelmed by the rebuilding task. Queenslanders responded, showing up to stranger's houses armed with buckets, mops, and empathy. They offered a home for people or pets, clothing, food, money, clothes washing, furniture and white goods. Many businesses also helped out, giving lunch to volunteers, restoring damaged photos for free or handing out cleaning products.

The Bligh Government is supporting, maintaining and developing this renewed generosity by ensuring volunteering remains a valued component of Queensland society. Volunteering is recognised in the Q2 targets, with a commitment to increase the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities as volunteers by 50 per cent in 2020.

To meet this target, in 2011-12, the Queensland Government will provide \$368,000 to Volunteering Queensland as the peak volunteering body in Queensland. The Volunteering Queensland funding will be directed towards registration, information collection, database development and maintenance, program assistance, resource development and research to assist non-government organisations and individual volunteers/volunteer groups.

Over the summer period, Volunteering Queensland reported over 80,000 people had registered with its Community Response to Extreme Weather (CREW); a referral service between volunteers and natural disaster response agencies. In June 2011, the Queensland Government provided an additional \$100,000 of non-recurrent funding to improve the operation of the CREW database. As part of the upgrade, those registered will be contacted to link volunteers with community organisations and ensure greater preparedness for future disaster events.

The Bligh Government strongly believes that all Queenslanders can contribute to their communities through volunteering. From supporting experienced, older Queenslanders through \$18,000 additional funding for the Golden Gurus project to acknowledging the enthusiasm and commitment of younger Queenslanders at the Young Volunteer Awards, the Queensland Government recognises volunteering as a vital part of strong communities.

Non-Government Question on Notice

No. 11

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

In relation to Housing Services as per p 3-16 of the Service Delivery Statement, will the Minister provide a breakdown for figures over the last year of the Housing Register, including how many people were new additions to the Housing Register, how many people in total have been on the Register in the last 12 months, how many people have been on the Register for all of the last 12 months, and how many people were removed from the waiting list because they were successfully placed (and have not since returned to the list)?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to social housing as demonstrated by our record investment of \$500 million from the Queensland Future Growth Fund. This commitment has been matched by the Federal Labor Government who injected \$1.16bn into the Queensland economy to build 4000 new social housing dwellings and upgrade 28,000 existing homes. This stimulus investment under the Nation Building Jobs Plan was opposed by the Coalition that the LNP members of Queensland Parliament are a member of, placing these 4000 new homes and 28,000 upgrades at risk.

We have seen a significant rise in social housing applications following the global financial crisis, with 15,277 new approved applications added to the Housing Register that were eligible for long-term social housing during the 12 months from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011.

As at 30 June 2011, there were 30,108 applications registered for long-term social housing. A total of 19,922 applications have been on the Housing Register for long-term social housing for all of the 12 months to 30 June 2011. This figure includes applicants who have been assessed as having low to moderate needs.

In relation to this figure, it is important to note that a 'wait list' process of allocating social housing has not been used in Queensland since 2008 when the Queensland Government introduced the One Social Housing System. Under the One Social Housing System, the 'wait list' has been replaced with the Housing Register where priority for allocation to housing is based on levels of need, with individuals in greater need being prioritised for social housing against those with less needs.

Under the One Social Housing System, a range of housing support options are offered to households facing housing stress who have applied for social housing. In 2010-11, 50,563 households were assisted with bond loans, 2,873 households were assisted with rental grants, 3,960 used the RentConnect Advisory Service, 884 obtained tenancies through the National Rental Affordability Scheme. These rental grants bond loans and other support provide prompt assistance to moderate and low needs applicants for social housing into private rental accommodation. Some of these applicants remain on the Register; however it would be incorrect to assume they have not received housing assistance.

As at 31 May 2011, 2,814 new social housing dwellings had been built or bought in Queensland in the last financial year alone. Thanks in part to these new homes, the average time on the register that an applicant assessed as either high or very high needs person spent on the register before being successfully placed in social housing has reduced, from 11 months, to 10 months. This is an update to the figure published in the Budget Service Delivery Statement at 3-15, which was correct at the point in time when reports were made to Queensland Treasury.

I am advised that 6,384 new households were allocated to social rental housing from the Housing Register for the 11 months 2010-11 to 31 May 2011.

Non-Government Question on Notice

No. 12

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

With reference to p 3-6 and 3-7, under the Nation Building program in 2010-11, can the Minister state for all approved projects,

- (a) the number of commencements and the number of completions,
- (b) the performance requirements under the Commonwealth funding, and
- (c) the reporting mechanisms and status of Queensland in meeting the requirements?

ANSWER

(a) Page 3-7 of the State Budget refers to overall forecast figures for construction completions and commencements, which include the following under the Nation Building and Jobs Plan program for 2010-11:

- 791 commencements forecast
- 2,498 completions forecast.

(b) The performance requirements associated with the Nation Building Program are described in the Social Housing Initiative Guidelines, which specify that the initiative will be assessed against the following key requirements:

- increase the supply of social housing dwellings within a jurisdiction;
- increase the allocation of housing to people with highest needs on public housing waiting lists;
- facilitate or support the transition of persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to secure, long term accommodation;
- adhere to universal design principles that facilitate better access for persons with disability and older persons;
- constructed dwellings are environmentally sustainable; and
- promote activity in the short term using a variety of procurement arrangements, including spot purchases of house and land packages and purchases 'off the plan'.

(c) The Department of Communities is in regular contact with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The Department of Communities has met all Commonwealth requirements.

Non-Government Question on Notice

No. 13

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

Under the Nation Building program, as on p 3-6 and 3-7 of the Service Delivery Statement, can the Minister state the average cost per occupant of all projects, including an average cost per region of all projects, and an average cost per accommodation unit of all projects including a regional breakdown?

ANSWER

The Department of Communities does not calculate the average cost per occupant. This is because the average cost per occupant does not provide useful information as to the efficiency of the Nation Building program, as appropriate occupancy rates vary for each type of dwelling. For example, a two-bedroom unit may be occupied by a single person who mobilises in a wheelchair, and who has specific equipment needs for two bedrooms, but may also be allocated to a family consisting of two parents and two young children.

At 30 June 2011, the average cost per dwelling under the Nation Building program was \$0.270 million. This is below the Commonwealth target average of \$0.3 million per dwelling, and confirms that this record build of new social housing has been delivered on budget, delivering real value for money for the people of Queensland.

The average cost in each of the seven Department of Communities' regions was:

- South East—\$0.273 million
- Brisbane—\$0.247 million
- North Coast—\$0.293 million
- South West—\$0.260 million
- Central Queensland—\$0.261 million
- North Queensland—\$0.296 million
- Far North Queensland—\$0.282 million
- Queensland—\$0.270 million.

Non-Government Question on Notice

No. 14

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

In regards to the Office for Women as on page 3-7, can the Minister provide the following details for the events, seminars, courses and workshops provided (listed separately and by event name):

- (a) number of attendees at each event and event location;
- (b) cost of each event; and
- (c) number of departmental employees, Ministers and other Government representatives attending each event?

ANSWER

In 2010-11, the Office for Women delivered 58 events, workshops, courses and seminars across Queensland, attended by approximately 1,000 women.

All events support the Advancing Queensland Women Strategy to create economic security and promote leadership opportunities for Queensland women.

Priorities under the strategy, which each event aims to support, include:

- providing pathways and improved conditions for women's employment;
- increasing women's access to education and training;
- supporting women's participation in leadership and community life; and
- influencing government policies, programs and service delivery functions to advance women's equality.

The total expenditure for events, seminars and workshops in 2010-11 was \$164,581. Please note this expenditure does not include 'Women in Hard Hats' activities delivered by industry partners or other agencies where the Office for Women contributed financial or in-kind support.

A breakdown of events, seminars and workshops is as follows:

Program	No of events	Location	Attendees	Number of Departmental employees, Minister, Government Representatives	2010-11 Expenditure
Community Leadership Seminars	3 events	Statewide	140	Approx 2-4 per event	\$6,927
Indigenous Women's Mentoring	9 events	Statewide	83	Approx 2-3 per event	\$2,336
Women in Hard Hats	2 events	Statewide	207	Approx 5 per event	\$8,500
Indigenous Women on Boards	2 events	Brisbane	25	Approx 1-2 per event	\$25,631
Capability Workshops for Rural Women	2 events	Statewide	110	Approx 1 per event	\$45,000

Program	No of events	Location	Attendees	Number of Departmental employees, Minister, Government Representatives	2010-11 Expenditure
Mentoring for Women in Social Housing	9 events	Statewide	189	Approx 2-3 per event	\$15,306
Employment Pathways Project	30 events	Statewide	243	Nil	\$60,381
Advancing Queensland Women strategy launch	1 event	Mackay	30	Approx 5	\$500
Total	58	N/A	1027	N/A	\$164,581

Non-Government Question on Notice

No. 15

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

With reference to the services provided by the Community Services Department (p3-9 of the SDS), can the Minister state for each area of the Department including the Office for Women, the Office for Seniors and the Office for Volunteers—

- (a) total expenditure per office;
- (b) expenditure broken down into salaries and wages; services and supplies; advertising; and any other relevant headings; and
- (c) total staff employed in each office, separated into pay levels?

ANSWER

The Indicative budget 2011-12 Service Summary Expenditures for the Office for Women, Office for Seniors, Office for Volunteering and Office for Youth, as reported under Women's Services and Community and Youth Justice Services on page 3-9 of the SDS is as follows:

Service Summary Expenditure	Office for Women 2011-12 Indicative Budget	Office for Seniors 2011-12 Indicative Budget	Office for Volunteering 2011-12 Indicative Budget	Office for Youth 2011-12 Indicative Budget
Salaries and Wages	\$2.781m	\$0.859m	\$0.489m	\$3.019m
Supplies and Services	\$1.779m	\$0.076m	\$0.155m	\$1.634m
Advertising	\$0.176m	\$0.615m	\$0.044m	\$0.076m
Total	\$4.736m	\$1.550m	\$0.688m	\$4.729m

The total number of FTE staff employed by the Office for Women, Office for Seniors, Office for Volunteering and Office for Youth, as reported under Women's Services and Community and Youth Justice Services on page 3-9 of the SDS, and the associated pay level is as follows:

Pay Level	Office for Women	Office for Seniors	Office for Volunteering	Office for Youth
Band 9	1.0	1	0	2.0
Band 8	2.0	1.0	1.0	3.0
Band 7	3.2	2.8	1.0	4.0
Band 6	14.5	1.0	1.8	9.8
Band 5	2.8	2.0	0	1.8
Band 4	1.0	1.0	0	2.7
Band 3	2.0	1	1.0	4.6
Band 2	0.5	0	0	0
Band 1	0	0	0	0
Total	27.00	9.8	4.8	27.90

It should be noted Director (Band 9) and Executive Assistant (Band 3) appear on Office for Seniors expenditure reports, however the positions are apportioned between the Office for Seniors and the Office for Volunteering.

Non-Government Question on Notice

No. 16

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

With reference to the income statement for the Commission for Children, Young People and Child Guardian as on p 3-36 of the service delivery statement, can the Minister provide:

- (a) the total number of blue cards processed for 2010-11;
- (b) the total revenue resulting from blue card processing; and
- (c) the total cost of blue card processing separated into staff and other costs?

ANSWER

(a) The total estimated actual number of blue card and exemption applications processed for 2010-11 was 298,750.

(b) The total estimated actual revenue resulting from blue card processing for 2010-11 was \$7,534,000.

(c) The total estimated actual cost of blue card processing for 2010-11 was \$14,603,886 comprising:

- \$6,871,557 for staffing, and
- \$7,732,329 for other costs.

(d) The Queensland Government does not seek to recover the whole cost of the blue card system through processing fees. We instead provide a subsidy to the cost of the processing fee through our funding to the Commission in order to make the blue cards processing fees more affordable for applicants.

(e) Audited actual revenue and costs for 2010-11 will be provided in the Commission's annual financial statements to be published in the Commission's 2010-11 Annual Report.

Non-Government Question on Notice

No. 17

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

With reference to Youth Justice, can the Minister detail the total operating budget for the Youth Justice portfolio in 2009/10 and 2010/11 and 2011/12 (reported by year and by expenditure type—employee expenses, supplies and services, grants and other expenditure)?

ANSWER

The total operating budget of the Youth Justice portfolios in Queensland is as follows:

- 2009-10 total operating expenses was \$88.906 million against a budget of \$90.219 million. This covered \$72.576 million for employee expenses, \$10.997 million for supplies and services and \$5.334 million for grants.
 - 2010-11 total operating expenses was \$95.462 million against a budget of \$95.812 million. This covered \$78.257 million for employee expenses, \$10.142 million for supplies and services and \$7.063 million for grants.
 - 2011-12 total operating budget estimate is \$105.024 million. This covers \$84.772 million for employee expenses, \$12.480 million for supplies and services and \$7.772 million for grants.
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Non-Government Question on Notice

No. 18

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

With reference to Youth Justice can the Minister state the total operating budget and expenditure and number of staff for each youth justice service centre in 2009/10 and 2010/11 and the estimated budget for each YJSC in 2011/12? (reported by year and for each service centre)?

ANSWER

Through the Department of Communities, the Queensland Government is responsible for supervising young people involved in the youth justice system. Youth justice staff work with young people and their families to address the factors that contribute to offending behaviour and encourage young people to build positive connections with their community.

Youth justice service centres run many programs aimed at preventing young people from re-offending, such as Aggression Replacement Training, Changing Habits and Reaching Targets, as well as post-detention programs that encourage reintegration into communities. These programs help young people to build connections with their communities, learn about the consequences of their offending and increase their skills and confidence, which is vital for achieving long-term behavioural change.

A breakdown of the operating budget, expenditure and staff at each youth justice service centre is provided in the following table.

Youth Justice Service Centres

Service Centre	2009-10 Budget	2009-10 Actual	2009-10 FTEs	2009-10 HC	2010-11 Budget	2010-11 Est. Actual	2010-11 FTEs	2010-11 HC	2011-12 Indicative Budget
Atherton Youth Justice Service Centre	617,507	648,049	6.80	7.00	634,085	685,518	7.84	10.00	614,288
Brisbane North Youth Justice Service Centre	1,283,727	1,240,313	13.54	16.00	1,314,788	1,367,824	17.18	20.00	1,361,486
Brisbane Service Centre Youth & Family Support	1,276,826	1,230,174	16.60	19.00	1,284,089	1,192,380	19.10	21.00	1,323,843
Brisbane South Youth Justice Service Centre	977,627	995,290	11.66	14.00	1,024,653	1,005,720	13.53	16.00	1,056,618
Bundaberg Youth Justice Service Centre	535,040	539,564	6.85	8.00	519,866	534,604	6.14	7.00	496,421
Caboolture Youth Justice Service Centre	1,897,273	1,793,665	23.05	25.00	1,969,829	1,854,572	22.36	27.00	2,034,669
Cairns Rural & Remote Youth Justice Service Centre	1,996,090	1,903,216	19.93	21.00	2,049,910	2,039,486	16.07	17.00	2,094,661
Cairns Youth Justice Service Centre	1,974,775	1,981,865	21.19	22.00	2,137,148	2,059,921	18.89	19.00	2,177,816
Charleville Youth Justice Service Centre	381,406	384,193	3.00	3.00	381,698	307,442	3.00	3.00	392,645
Cherbourg Youth Justice Service Centre	748,775	714,542	9.79	10.00	689,001	711,976	8.95	10.00	710,410
Cleveland Youth Justice Service Centre	541,839	499,269	6.56	8.00	564,299	489,939	6.57	8.00	584,609
Emerald Youth Justice Service Centre	106,164	64,586	0.50	1.00	100,968	48,703	Nil	Nil	103,951
Gladstone Youth Justice Service Centre	535,712	602,853	7.00	10.00	556,172	593,241	6.38	10.00	554,989
Hervey Bay Youth Justice Service Centre	1,089,037	1,085,595	12.37	14.00	1,128,711	1,189,300	12.83	16.00	1,156,747
Innisfail Youth Justice Service Centre	411,079	391,465	3.98	6.00	424,342	432,926	4.77	5.00	438,873
Ipswich Youth Justice Service Centre	1,266,293	1,254,943	15.51	21.00	1,319,869	1,373,898	16.92	21.00	1,343,462
Mackay/Whitsunday Youth Justice Service Centre	1,417,436	1,303,097	15.22	17.00	1,481,929	1,401,641	16.32	19.00	1,517,971
Maroochydore Youth Justice Service Centre	1,277,191	1,300,987	17.10	22.00	1,309,742	1,285,893	16.15	19.00	1,357,170
Mermaid Beach Youth Justice Service Centre	1,460,610	1,591,204	17.57	22.00	1,470,813	1,763,060	20.93	32.00	1,513,052
Mt Isa Youth Justice Service Centre	1,889,670	1,767,019	17.02	18.00	1,817,564	1,550,142	14.00	14.00	1,992,858
Rockhampton Youth Justice Service Centre	2,158,878	2,138,649	22.44	27.00	2,092,435	2,030,633	21.96	27.00	1,943,334
Roma Youth Justice Service Centre	440,564	431,442	3.33	4.00	449,111	425,455	5.35	6.00	462,771
Toowoomba Youth Justice Service Centre	1,689,178	1,833,245	15.10	20.00	1,756,308	1,790,734	20.57	23.00	1,811,315
Townsville Youth Justice Service Centre	2,221,847	2,061,144	22.91	25	2,324,255	2,097,905	24.03	27	2,377,625
Western District Youth Justice Service Centre	937,947	981,338	12.61	15.00	965,933	1,048,503	7.89	9.00	1,304,386
Woodridge Youth Justice Service Centre	1,661,185	1,675,646	17.60	22.00	1,733,690	1,717,546	20.26	25.00	1,772,980
Grand Total	30,793,676	30,413,355	339.23	397.00	31,501,208	30,998,962	347.99	411.00	32,498,950

Non-Government Question on Notice

No. 19

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

With reference to staffing, as per p 3-9 of the SDS, can the Minister provide for each output heading under Community Services, Housing and Homelessness Services, and Women, the performance measures for all SES staff?

ANSWER

The Department of Communities uses the template set by the Public Service Commission for its SES performance agreements.

The template includes a list of specific and measurable objectives and performance indicators for the next financial year. The SES performance agreements are entered into with the Director-General at a SES officer's substantive appointment as part of the employment contract.

Each agreement is constructed in parallel with and linked to the Director-General's Performance Agreement.

The SES performance agreement is based on four key elements:

- Beyond Business Unit Objectives
- Business Unit Systems and Governance Objectives
- Business Unit People Management Objectives
- Executive Development.

SES performance agreements are reviewed in June and December of each year.

Non-Government Question on Notice

No. 20

Asked on 1 July 2011

THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

With reference to Youth Justice:

(a) What is the total operating budget and expenditure for each youth detention centre in 2009/10 and 2010/11 and what is the estimated budget for 2011/12 reported by year and for each centre?

(b) How many offenders were admitted to each youth detention centre in 2009/10 and 2010/11 (reported by centre and for each year)

(c) How many offenders admitted in (b) were readmitted to detention in either 2009/10 or 2010/11?

ANSWER

(a)

Youth Detention Centres					2011-12 Indicative Budget
	2009-10 budget	2009-10 actual	2010-11 budget	2010-11 actual	
Brisbane Youth Detention Centre	22,636,842	22,925,039	23,487,643	24,016,247	24,168,829
Cleveland Youth Detention Centre	13,098,349	12,749,526	15,331,020	15,288,542	23,906,829
Total	35,735,191	35,674,565	38,818,663	39,304,789	48,075,658

The operating budget for the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre was \$22.6 million in 2009-10, \$23.5 million in 2010-11 and is estimated to be \$24.2 million in 2011-12. Expenditure was \$22.9 million in 2009-10 and is estimated to be \$24.0 million in 2010-11. The \$529,000 overspend in 2010-11 is due to the impact of deferring expenditure of \$630,000 to 2011-12, resulting in it being removed from the 2010-11 budget, and subsequently, \$529,000 of the \$630,000 being successfully spent in 2010-11.

The operating budget for the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre was \$13.1 million in 2009-10, \$15.3 million in 2010-11 and is estimated at \$23.9 million for 2011-12. Expenditure was \$12.7 million in 2009-10 and is estimated to be \$15.3 million in 2010-11. The underspend in 2010-11 was due to savings in operational costs associated with the expansion of the centre.

(b) In 2009-10, a total of 778 distinct young people were admitted to Queensland youth detention centres.

The latest available data is for the period 1 July 2010 to 31 March 2011. During that period, a total of 627 distinct young people were admitted to Queensland youth detention centres.

The average daily number of young people in detention for the 12 months ending March 2011 was 87 for Brisbane Youth Detention Centre and 52 for Cleveland Youth Detention Centre.

(c) It is important to note that admissions to detention are counted when a young person is remanded in custody and when they are sentenced to a detention order.

This means that a young person initially remanded in custody for an offence and then sentenced to a detention order for the same offence will be recorded as having a subsequent admission. Therefore it would be inaccurate to presume that these figures represent the number of young people who have reoffended following a period of detention.

A total of 464 young people admitted to Queensland youth detention centres in 2009-10 had a subsequent admission by 31 March 2011.

A total of 255 young people admitted to Queensland youth detention centres between 1 July 2010 and 31 March 2011 had a subsequent admission by 31 March 2011.