



Speech by

Hon. Robert Swarten

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Hansard Wednesday, 18 April 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Public Housing, Water Usage

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology) (9.56 am): Members of the House are well aware that south-east Queensland is in the midst of the worst drought on record. All property owners need to curb water use and reduce water consumption. The Department of Housing is one of the largest property owners in Queensland with 8,424 properties and 16,345 tenancies in Brisbane. These properties include units, townhouses, and detached houses.

For around two years we have been seeking from the Brisbane City Council a breakdown of kilolitre water usage for our properties. We finally received some of this information from Brisbane City Council on 5 April 2007. The council data shows that 78 per cent of the department's rateable properties in the Brisbane area have reduced their water consumption since 2004. It also shows that more than 3,000 of these properties used less than 400 litres per day.

On the other hand, 1,495 departmental properties have increased consumption since 2004. We have begun analysing this data and it is clear that there are a range of reasons behind this increase. Some properties were vacant at the first reading. Some smaller households have been replaced with large households. A total of 18 households were identified as having very high water usage and inspections were carried out on those properties as soon as we received the data. The inspections found eight major water leaks which have now been rectified. The tenants of these properties have been advised of the need to immediately report maintenance issues and to reduce water consumption.

The Department of Housing takes its responsibility as a property owner very seriously. All new property constructions, major modifications and upgrades are fitted with AAA-rated shower roses, taps and dual-flush toilets. Some 30,000 of the 55,000 social housing properties already have dual-flush toilets. All properties in south-east Queensland are being fitted with water efficient shower roses and water flow restrictors to taps in kitchens, laundries and bathrooms as part of a \$5.2 million program. As at 30 March 2007 more than 16,300 installations had been completed since this program started in September 2006. All 34,000 properties in south-east Queensland will be completed by July 2007.