



Speech by

## Hon. Robert Swarten

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Hansard Wednesday, 6 June 2007

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Beattie Labor Government, Nine Years of Achievement

**Hon. RE SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology) (10.02 am): Yesterday the Premier tabled nine years of achievements by this government. It is a remarkable, unmatched record and I would like to touch on just some of the achievements during those nine years within the Department of Public Works and Housing portfolios.

We have nearly doubled the social housing budget during that time and embarked on the most significant policy change in 60 years for housing assistance in Queensland through development of the One Social Housing Policy. In those nine years we have built over 4,000 units of accommodation and spot-purchased more than 1,500 properties for people to live in and implemented a host of other innovative housing reforms and solutions which include, but are not limited to, the establishment of the Brisbane Housing Company in 2002 with more than 893 low-income households assisted to date and the formation recently of the Gold Coast Housing Company; building community capacity in stressed neighbourhoods with funding of \$95.9 million under the Community Renewal program; having the best consumer protection legislation in Australia with regard to the building industry through the Building Services Authority; in 2003 introducing laws to stop unjust and inaccurate listings on tenancy databases through the Residential Tenancies Authority; in the past nine years, 366,519 households have been assisted by the Home Assist/Secure program which helps those over 60 and people with a disability to remain in their homes; the Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service has assisted more than half a million households; more than 42,000 people have been assisted with bond loans to access private rental accommodation.

We now have a maintenance program in the state's 34 Indigenous communities that is improving people's lives by extending the life of housing stock. The Department of Housing is investing \$127.2 million under the government's four-year Responding to Homelessness initiative. The centrepiece is the redevelopment of the heritage listed Lady Bowen complex to provide crisis accommodation and round-the-clock access to support and referral services. The state is making a bigger financial contribution to housing assistance in 2007-08 than the Commonwealth is through the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. That has been the case for the last four budgets.

Since the Beattie government was elected, more than \$8.5 billion worth of construction and maintenance projects have been successfully delivered through the Department of Public Works: hospitals, schools, public housing, courts, sports facilities, arts complexes, bridges, fire stations, police headquarters, correctional facilities—the list goes on and on. The Department of Public Works delivered the \$280 million Suncorp Stadium and the \$291 million Millennium Arts project. Regional Queensland has also benefited greatly through a vast range of projects.

Public Works builds buildings and it builds lives. Through QBuild, it is the state's largest employer of building trades apprentices, with more than 1,000 apprentices employed since 1998. I table a list of more than 800 significant projects statewide undertaken by the Department of Public Works during the period. I also table a list of more than 4,000 Department of Housing constructions.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Projects with a Construction Budget over \$500,000 and start dates between 1 July 1998 and 5 June 2007'.

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Number of Department of Housing dwellings commenced construction between 1 July 1998 to 31 March 2007 by suburb'.