

Question on Notice
No. 775
Asked on 17 June 2004

Mr WILSON asked the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing (MR SCHWARTEN)-

QUESTION:

With reference to last month's Federal Budget –

What additional assistance is to be provided for public housing and low cost housing in the electorate of Ferny Grove?

ANSWER:

The reality is that there is no additional assistance for public housing despite the countless reams of documents produced by the Federal Treasurer to explain and sell his budget. So unfortunately there is no additional housing assistance in regions such as the Ferny Grove electorate arising from the Federal budget.

Consequently, this means that waiting times will continue to increase for public, community and Indigenous housing, and more Queensland households will be condemned to lead a life of after-housing poverty.

This in contrast to the Housing Plan announced by the Leader of the Federal Opposition. Mr Latham's commitment to boost funding for housing by \$400 million over the next three years is in stark contrast to the Howard Government.

The failure to provide any additional assistance to social housing in Australia by the current Federal Government only highlights how critical the work I am doing with other State and Territory Housing Ministers really is. I will take this opportunity to remind the Member what is now being undertaken.

State and Territory Housing Ministers have been working together to look at ways to improve the housing system, and the Federal Minister responsible for Housing, Senator Kay Patterson, is observing progress and will hopefully be convinced to fully engage in the process. No single level of government can tackle the issue of worsening housing affordability by itself - we all have a role to play.

The key issue here though is that without clear leadership from the Federal Government, States and Territories will find it very difficult to put words into action. We need to set a clear direction together, as well as a joint commitment to work together and acceptance that current responses are not enough.

I welcome a Federal Labor Government's plan to have a Housing Minister as national leadership is imperative to deliver long-term structural changes to the housing sector.

Here in Queensland the Beattie Government is leading the way. The Brisbane Housing Company is now delivering 112 units of accommodation and may be an appropriate model for other areas of the State. A State Planning Policy on Housing and Residential Development is being developed and just recently substantial Stamp Duty concessions for first home buyers were announced.

Such initiatives need federal support to make a difference. I want to reiterate once again to the House that I will continue to urge my colleagues in other States and Territories, and Senator Patterson, that working together is the only way forward.