

**Question on Notice
No. 973
Asked on 1 September 2004**

QUESTION:

MR LEE asked the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women (Ms Boyle)—

Will she detail Queensland Government initiatives to encourage the construction of more environmentally sustainable housing?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government supports the development of housing that incorporates a range of sustainable design features. These features will not only reduce the amount of energy and water that the occupants use, but also improve comfort levels for occupants through design that closely considers the local climate, rather than the conventional approach of creating an artificial environment.

The Government achieves this through a diverse range of support initiatives, each of which target different segments of the Queensland housing market, including local governments, developers, builders, architects and potential homeowners.

To support local governments, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Local Government and Planning are jointly leading a process for the development and implementation of a sustainable housing code in Queensland. This approach includes consideration of appropriate design standards across Queensland's four climatic zones.

To ensure the full involvement of all relevant stakeholders, it is intended that this work be presented through a staged process, with the first stage comprising a discussion paper on cost-effective measures for environmental considerations in water, energy and greenhouse efficiencies.

Broader work on a 'Queensland Sustainable Housing Policy' could then be considered and implemented via a range of approaches, including incentives and regulation, and using performance-based design criteria.

Additionally, the voluntary 'Design it Build it' initiative is a partnership between peak industry bodies and the State Government under the Year of the Built Environment Program. This initiative involves the design and construction for public display of a number of sustainable houses with local governments across Queensland.

Currently, over 30 local governments have submitted an expression of interest in constructing a series of display houses that exemplify best industry practice

in environmental sustainability and smart housing initiatives. A number of local governments are progressing well with their local projects.

The EPA is also working to ensure that future energy code legislation addresses our State's specific climatic needs. This will provide house energy rating software measures which reflect appropriate Queensland housing design for the Tropics and Sub-Tropics, thus minimising the need for air-conditioning.

To assist the building sector, the EPA has supported the Housing Industry Association's 'Greensmart' professional accreditation program which is aimed at educating the building industry in sustainable housing design and construction. There are now approximately 300 Greensmart professionals operating throughout Queensland to provide advice, and to design and build environmentally-friendly houses and promote the advantages of sustainable housing.

In relation to the development industry, the EPA has provided support to the Urban Development Institute of Australia in their recent 'Sustainable Urban Development Program'. This partnership involved a State-wide competition for developers that resulted in 25 urban developments which showcase different elements of sustainable urban development. Successful applicants included Pacific Harbour, Bribie Island with QM Properties.

For potential homeowners, the EPA published and is currently distributing 40,000 copies of the "Your Home" Consumer Guide. Along with the supplementary technical manual, this represents the definitive guide to environmentally sustainable housing design for Australia. This is a joint venture between Commonwealth and State governments and industry.

These guides are being distributed freely to the public and to industry through media, the Government Call Centre, and through my officers who are promoting them at frequent public information seminars.