

Question on Notice
No. 511
Asked on Wednesday, 20 April 2005

Mr LANGBROEK asked the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing (MR SCHWARTEN) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the public housing portfolio -
Will he provide for 2003-04 and 2004-05 [year to date] (reported separately) the total number of (a) dwellings within the portfolio, (b) dwellings sold/disposed of, (c) commencements of new dwellings and (d) completions of new dwellings?

ANSWER:

I am disappointed in the Liberal Spokesperson for Housing's understanding of the housing portfolio by asking this narrow question which relates to public housing only.

The fact is in the past seven years the Beattie Government has developed new models to replace public housing because of his Federal colleagues' obsession with rent assistance.

The Department of Housing provides publicly funded housing through three main programs Public Housing, Community Housing and Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Housing.

Since I have been Minister for Housing there has been a net gain of properties across the housing portfolio and I am very proud of this achievement as the Howard Government has withdrawn more than \$400 million from Queensland under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement.

As a result of this policy shift at a national level, I have instigated significant reform over the last seven years to ensure we are better utilising our asset base and providing assistance to as many Queenslanders as possible. In fact the Department of Housing now assist more than 240,000 Queenslanders up from around 191,000 under the former Liberal Minister for Housing, David Watson.

This has been achieved by diversifying the type of housing assistance we provide and investing in initiatives such as the Brisbane Housing Company. The state government has invested around \$90 million in the Brisbane Housing Company which now leases more than 180 units and has almost 200 more units under construction or planned.

It is also the result of the significant investment during my period as Minister, to maintain our housing stock, having approved more than \$1 billion worth of upgrades and maintenance work.

Mr Speaker, when I inherited the portfolio from the former Liberal Minister maintenance and upgrades programs were neglected and as a result a lot of the public housing portfolio was in poor condition and some properties were impossible to rent because people simply refused to live there. In fact when I became Minister

there were 1,876 vacant dwellings across the state. By better property management practices this has been drastically reduced and we now boast the best record in the country in this regard.

Mr Speaker, I trust this answer provides the Member for Surfers Paradise with a more holistic view of the portfolio.