

Question on Notice
No. 782
Asked on 25 May 2005

MS MALE asked the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing (MR SCHWARTEN) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the provision of affordable housing in the fast-growing area of south east Queensland—

What measures is he implementing to assist with the growing need for low cost housing and how has this assisted people in the electorate of Glass House?

ANSWER:

The Department of Housing is aware that housing affordability problems are increasing in many areas of the State, and particularly across the rapidly growing south east Queensland region. The Office of Urban Management, charged with preparing the new Regional Plan for South East Queensland, estimates that by 2026 an additional 575,000 households will need to be accommodated in the region.

Many of these households will require affordable housing in the Sunshine Coast area, of which the Glass House electorate is a part.

The department's capacity to provide an adequate supply of low-cost housing is significantly constrained by the lack of responsibility taken by the Australian Government to maintain funding for traditional housing assistance under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement.

Despite these constraints the department is striving to maintain its commitment to the supply of quality public rental and community-managed rental housing. Since The Beattie Government was elected more than \$4.9 million has been allocated for public housing and other housing related assistance in the Glasshouse electorate.

The department acknowledges that these efforts may not be enough to meet all the growing need for the area and for the wider region. Given this situation, the department has been looking at various methods to develop and sustain affordable housing provision in Queensland and the key initiatives are also detailed in the attachment. The Government is making every effort to ensure that not only the available resources of Government but also those of local government and the private and not-for-profit sectors are directed, where possible, to addressing housing affordability issues.

ATTACHMENT

Affordable Housing Strategy

- In developing other responses to increasing affordability problems in the wider housing system, the State Government adopted the 'Affordable Housing in Sustainable Communities Strategic Action Plan' in June 2001.
- Several key initiatives have been progressed under the strategy including establishment of the Brisbane Housing Company, development of an 'Affordable Housing Protocol for Surplus Government Land', development of brokerage services to assist new affordable housing projects, and preparation of resources to support policy and planning initiatives by Local Government and affordable housing proposals by the private sector.
- The department is developing a 'State Planning Policy on Housing and Residential Development' under the *Integrated Planning Act 1997*. This policy seeks to establish planning policies and schemes to support the provision of a diverse range of housing (including affordable housing) to meet the needs of Queenslanders now and in the future. The Policy is intended to assist in providing a more supportive planning environment for developers interested in the affordable end of the market.
- Departmental officers are also continuing to work with local governments to identify solutions to local housing issues through the release and implementation of the 'Local Government Housing Resource Kit'.

Capital Grants for Affordable Housing

- An extension of the Affordable Housing Strategy is the Affordable Housing Capital Grants Program initiative which will provide \$25 million in additional funding over the financial years of 2005-06 and 2006-07 to not-for-profit organisations, including Local Governments, to increase the supply of affordable housing in the targeted locations of the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Townsville.
- A feature of this initiative is that applicants should have the capacity to make a contribution to the project of a minimum of 20% of the grant value. Contributions, which can be in the form of cash, land or other dollar value contributions, will ensure a housing response in excess of the \$20 million provided by the Queensland Government.
- Early in 2005 the department called for proposals under this initiative. The department is now assessing proposals received and will make decisions about funding based on housing need and the capacity of proponents to provide affordable housing for low-income households. If this initiative proves successful in these locations it may provide the springboard for expansion to other regions in the future.