

**Question on Notice
No. 284
Asked on 7 March 2007**

Mr Stevens asked the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology (MR SCHWARTEN)—

QUESTION:

With reference to Public Housing—

Will he detail (a) the expenditure on public housing for 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04, 2004–05, 2005–06 and 2006–07 (to date) and the amount spent in each local authority area (reported separately) and (b) the number of houses built for 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04, 2004–05, 2005–06 and 2006–07 (to date) in each local authority area, (reported separately)?

ANSWER:

Full details of the Departmental expenditure for the years requested are published in the annual report and budget papers which are on the public record.

The Department of Housing has spent more than \$1.5 billion since 2000 on providing almost 4000 new dwellings across the State. As well, the Department has spent more than \$513 million since 2000 on maintenance to thousands of properties within its portfolio in every region of Queensland. If the member requires specific information about projects in a specific area I will endeavour to provide that information.

In addition, since the Brisbane Housing Company was established in 2002-03, the department has provided the company with cash and land contributions to a value of \$104 million to commence over 800 dwelling units.

The Honourable Member will also be aware that \$15 million has also been made available from the Department of Housing budget to establish the Gold Coast Housing Company.

I would request that the Honourable Member inquire of his Federal colleagues how much per household the Federal Government has provided in rent assistance per local government area as clearly the Honourable Member does not understand that the Federal Government policy of funding rent assistance in preference to public housing has left low income earners high and dry. Rent assistance is not keeping up with the increases in rent in Queensland. In many parts of Queensland rents have increased by 200% in five years, whereas rent assistance has gone up 15%. This is forcing more and more people to seek housing assistance from public housing. Rent assistance does nothing to increase the supply of affordable housing.

As the Honourable Member can see from the graph below the amount of Commonwealth rent assistance flowing into Queensland has been steadily increasing under his colleagues in the Federal Government. At the same time, public housing funding has been static, which is in reality a large cut when you take into account increasing construction costs. If the Federal Government had indexed the funding from levels at 1996, Queensland would have received an additional \$400 million in

funding for public housing. Clearly its policy of pouring over \$500 million a year into rent assistance is a failure as we can all see the private rental market is collapsing. I urge the Honourable Member to take the issue of more funding for public housing to his colleagues in Federal Parliament. I know the Honourable Member is new to this portfolio but now he has been informed about this issue of the deeply flawed Federal Government Housing Policy and how Queensland is missing out it in funding it behoves him to actually do something about it.

The Leader of the Liberal Party in Queensland has demonstrated that when a Liberal party member disagrees with a Federal policy the only honourable way forward is to vigorously and publicly oppose it.

