

Question on Notice
No. 428
Asked on Tuesday 13 March 2007

MR O'BRIEN asked the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology (MR SCHWARTEN)-

Question

What action is his department taking to address the housing shortage on Thursday Island?

Answer

In relation to the employee housing shortage on Thursday Island, the Department of Public Works is currently in the process of constructing two duplexes (four units). Two units are allocated to the Department of Emergency Services, while the other two units are allocated to the Department of Education, Training and the Arts. The units are due for completion in June 2007.

In addition, the Department of Public Works, as part of its accommodation strategy on Thursday Island, continues to monitor the property market for emerging opportunities. Consequently, in November 2006 the Department identified and completed a strategic land acquisition of a 2,023m² parcel of land. The Department is currently undertaking a land use assessment to determine the optimum development for the site. It is envisaged that a development consisting of four to eight units, subject to a Material Change of Use Development Application will further boost employee housing accommodation on Thursday Island.

The Department of Housing has commenced work on the development of a Thursday Island housing strategy.

The strategy will consider all aspects of housing provision on Thursday Island, including impacts for Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islander people, non-Indigenous residents and Government and private sector employees. Current and projected demand for and supply of housing; supply of appropriate land and related infrastructure; town planning arrangements and the mix of housing and tenure types will be included in the study. Housing demand, supply and capacity of surrounding islands may also be considered.

The initial phase will be conducted by consultants, SGS Economics and Planning Pty Ltd, which will provide evidence-based research findings pertaining to the issues on the island. Based on that research, the consultants will propose potential options for addressing the current and future housing need, which will inform the development of a Thursday Island Housing Strategy. The Thursday Island Housing Strategy will propose long-term responses to housing and land issues identified as impeding the achievement of successful housing outcomes on Thursday Island.