

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 1537**  
**Asked on 28 October 2008**

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the Annual Garden Awards—

Will he advise what benefits the awards bring to tenants and public housing in general?

ANSWER:

The 2008 Water Wise Garden Awards provide 1,170 examples of social housing tenants taking initiative to beautify and improve the homes and neighbourhoods they live in. This figure represents the number of participants in the Garden Awards this year, which is an increase on last year despite the continuing challenge of dry conditions.

The Garden Awards provide a wide range of benefits to social housing tenants, the Department of Housing, the community and the environment:

- The Awards encourage pride in the accomplishments of social housing tenants and demonstrates the care they have for their homes. This contributes to a positive focus on social housing, which counteracts the stigma which some sections of the community associate with social housing.
- Time spent in the garden promotes a healthier lifestyle including moderate exercise and in some cases healthy home grown food.
- The Awards are the result of hundreds of volunteers in tenant groups working collaboratively with the department's Area Office staff to promote and manage the Awards. These volunteers and their tenant groups benefit from the contacts they make in the community among businesses, community leaders, social housing tenants and community organisations.
- Gardening efforts, especially in unit estates, can help promote harmony and reduce neighbourhood disputes through the opportunities it creates for social interactions and the sharing of a common interest and goal by tenants.
- The collaborative management of the Awards by departmental staff and tenant groups and the actual award presentations to tenants, provides an opportunity for positive engagement outside the constraints of the usual landlord and tenant relationship.
- The Water Wise theme of the Garden Awards educates and promotes the responsible use of water amongst social housing tenants.

There are diverse benefits derived from the Garden Awards and these contribute to supporting greener, safe and caring communities as part of the Government's vision for 2020, Towards Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland.