

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 393**  
**Asked on 13 March 2008**

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

**QUESTION:**

As a lack of affordable housing continues to disadvantage many families in my community because economic growth pushes rental prices up and availability down—

(1) What new housing has been provided in the Gladstone Electorate for 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 to present (each reported separately)?

(2) What extra housing is proposed to alleviate the stress on residents in the electorate of Gladstone?

**ANSWER:**

The State Government acknowledges the difficulties some Gladstone households on low to moderate incomes face in finding affordable rental housing. However, the problem of declining affordability is not limited to Gladstone:

- Between 2001–02 and 2006–07, for example, median rents in Gladstone for three-bedroom dwellings rose by 53%. The Queensland average was 51%.
- Rents in Gladstone are still lower than the Queensland average. In 2006–07, the median weekly rent for a three-bedroom dwelling was \$260 in Gladstone and \$280 in Queensland.

The complexities surrounding the issue of adequate affordable housing supply require an integrated national approach to respond to this problem.

I am pleased to advise that the Rudd Labor Government has outlined initiatives to work with the States towards addressing housing affordability.

The Queensland Government is working with the Australian Government on the new initiatives, under the auspice of the recently formed Council of Australian Governments' Housing Working Group. This includes consideration of the Queensland Government's contribution to the initiative.

The following initiatives are being prepared:

- A 'National Rental Affordability Scheme'. This scheme will stimulate the supply of up to 100,000 new affordable rental properties across Australia. These will be rented to low and moderate income households in housing stress at 20% below the market rate.
- Superannuation-style 'First Home Saver Accounts' to help potential homebuyers save for their first home.
- A 'Housing Affordability Fund'. This fund will invest \$500 million over five years in infrastructure linked to housing developments to reduce the costs of new homes.
- A 'National Housing Supply Council' to provide advice on the adequacy of land release and housing supply to meet future needs.

- A Commonwealth Land Audit. A revamped land release policy will require all Government agencies to show why surplus land should not be released for the benefit of local communities.
- 'A Place to Call Home' Homelessness initiative. The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments will jointly fund the construction of 600 additional dwellings for the homeless over the next five years.

(1) In relation to the Department of Housing's role in providing new housing in Gladstone, in 2005–06, the department purchased four, two-bedroom duplex units; two, four-bedroom detached houses; and a three-bedroom duplex unit in the Gladstone electorate for a total approved budget of \$1.403 million. The department commenced construction of 23 studio units and a community facility for an approved budget of \$5.446 million under the Community-managed Housing – Studio Units Program. Construction was completed in 2006–07.

In 2006–07, the department purchased two land development sites for an approved budget of \$0.840 million. The department commenced construction of 12, two-bedroom apartments on one of these sites for an approved budget of \$3.686 million. Construction was completed in 2007–08. The department also commenced construction of a four-bedroom detached house for an approved budget of \$0.466 million. Construction was completed in 2007–08.

In 2007–08 to date, the department has purchased a three-bedroom detached house for an approved budget of \$0.355 million.

(2) In 2008–09, the Department of Housing proposes to commence construction of four, two-bedroom and two, three-bedroom apartments to assist with alleviating the stress on residents in the Gladstone electorate.

The department continues to source suitable land development sites and existing properties in the Gladstone electorate. Acquisitions are dependant upon the availability of properties and their ability to meet the department's acquisition criteria.