

**Question on Notice
No. 1472
Asked on 8 October 2009**

MR WENDT asked the Minister for Public Works and Information and Communication Technology (MR SCHWARTEN)-

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise what the State Government has been doing to assist the construction industry during the recent difficult economic climate, particularly given the number of tradesmen and women living in my electorate of Ipswich West?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is very mindful of the need to assist the construction industry during the current economic climate and one way it is doing this is through its purchasing activities. I am pleased to say that the great majority of the Queensland Government's expenditure on goods, services and construction is spent locally. To assist in providing support to local businesses, the State Procurement Policy requires all agencies to give competitive local firms a full, fair and reasonable opportunity to supply to the Queensland Government.

The Queensland Government is also assisting the construction industry by continuing with its building program and providing new and future opportunities to the construction sector.

The Department of Public Works is currently delivering a Building Capital Works Program of more than \$8.5 billion which includes police stations, hospitals, correctional centres, school facilities, courthouses, government employee housing, public housing and government office buildings throughout Queensland.

In addition to the State's Capital Works Program, the Queensland Government is working with the Australian Government to deliver the Nation Building-Economic Stimulus Plan (the Plan). The Plan will deliver housing, education and roads projects valued at approximately \$4 billion throughout Queensland, and will provide further opportunities and jobs in the Queensland construction industry.

The Director-General, Department of Public Works is the Queensland Government's Coordinator for the Plan. The department is providing both program and project management services for the Plan's Social Housing Initiatives and procurement management for the Building the Education Revolution program on behalf of the Department of Communities and the Department of Education and Training respectively. The Plan is due to be completed in approximately two years.

The Nation Building-Economic Stimulus Plan is aimed at the private sector to stimulate the economy and create employment. Information regarding the projects within the Brisbane/Ipswich and Darling Downs/South West Queensland regions is available at <http://www.nationbuilding.qld.gov.au/tenders/Pages/default.aspx>. This information is updated regularly.

The Department of Public Works recently engaged Master Builders Queensland to design and deliver specialist occupational health and safety training to Prequalification (PQC) System Level 1 and 2 contractors seeking to work on school projects that are included in the Building the Education Revolution program. One-day seminars are being delivered throughout the State and are aimed at managing the significant risks associated with construction work at schools during normal school hours.

The department is committed to keeping the building industry up-to-date with the latest information about current and future capital works building projects and relevant programs. This is achieved through regular updates on the department's website.

The department, through QBuild, is also playing a major role in assisting the construction industry by conducting an annual apprentice program with an online recruitment system.

On 31 October 2009, QBuild advertised its 2010 apprentice intake consisting of 79 full time apprentices, 15 school-based apprentices, four construction worker trainees and two horticultural trainees.

Since 1998, QBuild has employed 1,239 apprentices and trainees. As at 12 October 2009, QBuild is training 328 trade apprentices and trainees, which is a significant achievement and major benefit for the future of the Queensland construction industry.

The Queensland Building Services Authority also conducted free financial seminars for contractors at Ipswich in March and May this year. These seminars were designed to educate contractors on strategies to mitigate risk and protect their businesses in difficult financial times. Further seminars were also held in Brisbane to which all Ipswich licensees were invited.