

Question on Notice
No. 188
Asked on 23 April 2009

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

QUESTION:

As Rochedale South has a large number of tradesmen and women residing there – What is the State Government doing to assist the construction industry during these difficult economic times?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is assisting the construction industry during the current difficult economic situation 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 sector 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. This 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.

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

The Nation Building - Economic Stimulus Plan is aimed at the private sector to stimulate the economy and create employment. Since the announcement of the Plan in February 2009, approximately 3,000 people have attended Information Sessions in Brisbane and major regional centres regarding prequalification and registration.

The department is managing applications for registration and prequalification from contractors who are seeking to be eligible for the Nation Building - Economic Stimulus Plan and other government building capital works projects.

The Department of Public Works 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 of Public Works website.

The Department of Public Works, through QBuild, is also playing a major role in assisting the construction industry by conducting an annual apprentice program with an online recruitment system. This year alone, QBuild engaged 78 full time apprentices, 15 school-based apprentices, three construction worker trainees and four horticulture trainees.

Since 1998, QBuild has employed 1,239 apprentices and trainees. As at 1 May 2009, QBuild was training 343 trade apprentices and trainees (including the 2009 intake), which is a significant achievement and major benefit for the future of the Queensland construction industry.

The Queensland Government is pursuing initiatives to promote the building industry and public confidence around the delivery of construction services throughout Queensland. The Queensland Building Services Authority (BSA) has embarked on a range of strategies to increase contractor and consumer confidence, including:

- providing early financial and business advice to contractors
- a promotional media campaign to promote consumer confidence in licensees
- an aggressive compliance program to remove unlicensed contractors and other offenders from the industry
- introduction of fairer contracts in the residential sector
- education and awareness for contractors on topical issues such as business practices and avoiding building defects.