

Question on Notice

No. 235

Asked on 10 March 2011

MR HORAN asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

With reference to the urgent need for crisis housing in Toowoomba, with the Salvation Army trying to house 62 adults and 75 children in the last two weeks of February when the 14 crisis houses they operate were full—

Will the Minister address this crisis as a matter of urgency?

ANSWER

As a direct result of the January flood events, and the consequent prioritising of flood affected households for social housing, the capacity of the Department of Communities to offer short and long term housing to eligible applicants has been impacted.

However, this does not mean eligible households are not being assisted with housing services in Toowoomba as well as elsewhere in the State.

The Australian and Queensland Governments are providing more than \$284 million over five years (2008–09 to 2012–13) under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness to reduce homelessness in Queensland.

In 2010–11, about \$87 million has been allocated to more than 230 specialist homelessness services to provide support to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. These services are spread right throughout the State, and are focussing on those who need help the most.

The Queensland Government provides funding of \$5.4 million to specialist homelessness services in Toowoomba and surrounds to prevent people becoming homeless and to assist those who are homeless to access and maintain stable accommodation.

The Australian Government's Nation Building Program has been delivering 150 units of social housing within south west Queensland, which will also assist to alleviate housing pressures in the short term.

The Department of Communities will continue to work very closely with the Salvation Army crisis accommodation centre in Toowoomba and other regions of Queensland to identify appropriate housing solutions for people in need.

Personally, I was very pleased to meet with a representative from the Salvation Army at the Community Cabinet meeting in Toowoomba on 13 March 2011, who acknowledged the work being undertaken by the Queensland Government to deliver social housing assistance to people in need.

I was also very honored to join with the Honourable Kerry Shine MP, Member for Toowoomba North on 30 March 2011 to open a Queensland Government funded \$3.8 million community housing facility in Toowoomba, named the Hofmann and Wadley Wings after two former local presidents of the YWCA.

The 23 new affordable housing units in Mary Street are now available to provide safe, affordable and appropriate accommodation for people in need. The units have been designed to be adaptable so people with specific needs can access them, be it the elderly, disabled or specific health need. The housing complex will be managed by the YWCA Downs and South West Queensland Inc.

As I said at the time, the effort that went into making sure these homes were completed in the face of Queensland's recent disasters is a tribute to the people of Toowoomba.

The Queensland Government recognises the difficulties people are facing in accessing affordable housing, and the extra housing pressure communities like Toowoomba are facing after the floods. This recognition means addressing housing and homelessness continues to be a central plank in the Queensland Government's *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* vision of building safe and caring communities.