



**Monday 20 September 2010**

## **Department of Housing**

*Question No 1: Hon L MacLaren MLC asked in reference to Budget Paper No.2, Volume 3, page 904, Appropriations, Expenses and cash Assets:*

*1.1 Why was actual expenditure only \$458 million, which is less than the budgeted amount of \$680.154 million?*

Answer: The \$458 million referred to in the budget papers is the estimated outturn for 2009-10. This represents a reduction from the original budget of \$680 million to capital appropriations for the Commonwealth and State stimulus programs to more closely match the pattern of expenditure. Capital funds not received in 2009-10 were reflowed to 2010-11. Additionally, appropriations were reduced at the Mid Year Budget Review for savings in grants, procurement, media, marketing, consultants, advertising and fleet.

*1.2 Why is the total appropriation for 2010-11 estimated at \$391.550 million, which is \$66.657 million less than was spent last year?*

Answer: Appropriations to the Housing Authority in 2010-11 have been reduced due to the completion of the Commonwealth stimulus refurbishment program and the utilisation of the proposed Keystart dividend of \$53.7m in lieu of State appropriations.

*1.3 Was \$81 million remaining from last year's budget and why has it not been applied to this year's appropriations?*

Answer: All appropriations received in the 2009-10 financial year have been allocated to programs. Due to the nature of some projects, committed funds may not be paid until the next financial year.

*Question No 2: Hon L MacLaren MLC asked in reference to Budget Statements, budget paper No. 2, Volume 3, page 905, Significant Issues Impacting the Agency:*

*2.1: Last year's budget identified the waiting list for public housing continuing to grow as a Significant Issue Impacting the Agency. Considering that this year's budget estimates average waiting times for accommodations as 103 weeks, 5 months more than last year's estimate, why is this not listed as a Significant Issue Impacting the Agency in this year's budget?*

Answer: Dot point No. 2 of Budget Statements, Budget Paper No. 2, Volume 3, page 905 refers to the factors contributing to the growing waiting list.

2.2: *What has the department done to address the contributing factors identified in last year's budget: reduced housing affordability, the lack of private rental accommodation, high rents in the private market and reduced vacancy rates?*

2.3: *When will the Affordable Housing Strategy document be published?*

Answer 2.2 and 2.3: The Department of Housing has been in the process of developing a State Affordable Housing Strategy to address these issues. It is envisaged that the Strategy will be considered by Government either late this month or early October 2010.

2.4 *Are Indigenous Visitors Centres funded from the Housing section of the State Budget?*

Answer: Yes, funding has been provided from the Royalties for Regions program to the Housing Authority for the Indigenous Visitor's centres.

*Question No 3.1: Hon L MacLaren MLC asked how many people are currently on the waiting list for public housing.*

Answer: As at 31 August 2010, the waiting list consisted of 24,548 applications (54,800 people).

*Question No 3.2: Hon L MacLaren MLC asked what the department is doing to shorten the 103 week average waiting time.*

Answer: The Department is building new stock, freeing up current stock and providing pathways for tenants to transition to other housing opportunities.

The Department has programmed an increase in stock of 4,611 dwellings over the four years from 2007/08 to 2010/11. Under the Stage 1 Construction Program of the National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan the Department completed 313 new dwellings by 30 June 2010. Under Stage 2 of the Program, and through the Department's other programs, at least a further 1000 dwellings are anticipated to be completed by 31 December 2010.

The Department is continuously reviewing its tenancies to ensure they are target to those with ongoing need. For example tenants who are under-occupying are offered more appropriate public housing. Tenants who are no longer income-eligible for public housing are offered appropriate public housing, referred to community housing organisations, assisted in securing affordable private rental accommodation through the bond assistance scheme, or offered a shared equity loan. These properties are then made available for priority applicants on the waiting list.

*Question No 4: Hon L MacLaren MLC asked in reference to Budget Paper No.2, Volume 3, page 909, New Works:*

*4.1 Where does the Homelessness National Partnership Agreement – Western Australian Implementation Plan appear in this year's budget?*

Answer: The Homelessness National Partnership Agreement – Western Australian Implementation Plan for 2009-10 is listed under 'A Place to Call Home – Commonwealth Election Commitment – Homelessness Capital' on page 908 of Budget Paper No.2, Volume 3. The program for 2010-11 and forecast years appears on page 909.

*4.2: Will the Minister confirm that additional funding of \$4.2 million per annum will be allocated for community organisations to employ 35 full time employees in country locations will be finalised?*

Answer: This question should be referred to the Minister for Child Protection.

*4.3 Where does the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing appear in this year's budget?*

Answer: The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing appears on pages 912 and 913 under Grants and Subsidies of Budget Paper No.2, Volume 3.

*4.4 How much money will be available this year and what are the forward estimates for the project?*

Answer: Funds available under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing for this year and future years are:

2010-11	\$85.855m
2011-12	\$98.507m
2012-13	\$128.669m
2013-14	\$103.675m

The program runs for 10 years with funding for 2014-15 and beyond to be determined.