

**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2008-2009  
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Housing and Western Sydney**

**QUESTIONS FROM MS HALE**

***Increase in First Home Owners Grant***

1. Should the increases in the FHOG have been targeted only towards new-build housing only to avoid an inflationary effect?

**ANSWER:**

1. This grant is not administered by Housing NSW. This matter should be directed to my colleague the Treasurer for a response.

***Bonnyrigg***

2. I refer to the redevelopment of the Bonnyrigg public housing estate in Sydney. The 'Living Communities summary of contracts' document indicates that the number of social housing dwellings on the site will fall from 833, at commencement of the development process, to 699, at complement of the contract period, and that 134 replacement dwellings will be found elsewhere in western Sydney for the shortfall. Can you indicate the stock acquisition process for those 134 dwellings:

a. How many of the 134 dwellings have been acquired or built as at the end of the 2007-08 financial year?

b. What suburbs are those dwellings in?

c. Is the acquisition or construction cost of the 134 dwellings to be financed from normal allocations to Housing NSW's normal capital works program, or from the \$25 million savings to the public that accrue to the development (as indicated in the 'public sector comparator')?

**ANSWER:**

2. a, b & c. - The 134 dwellings to be built or acquired will be sourced from various Western Sydney local government areas. These dwellings are part of the total package of facilities and services being provided by Bonnyrigg Partnerships under the Bonnyrigg PPP. They are planned to be provided from 2013 to 2020.

***National Rental Affordability Scheme***

3. How many units of affordable housing does the department expect will be built in the next calendar year, via the Centre for Affordable Housing administration of the National Rental Affordability Scheme?

**ANSWER:**

3. This is not yet known.

4. How many expressions of interest have been received in response to the CAH's first round of funding offered through the National Affordable Rental Initiative?

**ANSWER:**

4. The Commonwealth Government has advised that it received expressions of interest for 49 projects in NSW under Call 1 of the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

***Housing stock statistics***

5. What is the average rent per-household, paid by public housing tenants (only - not community etc) across the state?

**ANSWER:**

5. Rents vary according to household size and household income. Ninety per cent of public housing tenants rents are subsidised and they receive a rental rebate. For the majority of these people their main source of income is Centrelink benefits. For these reasons, the average rent is quite low at approximately \$100 per week.

6. How many homes has Housing NSW sold to sitting tenants in the past 12 months?

**ANSWER:**

56 properties.

7. What was Housing NSW's total water (only water) bill for all residential properties across the state for the past 12 months?

8. What was Housing NSW's total income derived from 'tenant water charges' for exactly the same period?

**ANSWER:**

7 & 8 - The Ministerial Guidelines for water usage charging provide that the percentage water charge and the maximum weekly charge will be reviewed annually to ensure that Housing NSW does not charge tenants more for their water usage than it pays to water authorities for water usage in shared metered homes. For homes with a separate meter, when Housing NSW receives a bill from a water authority it adjusts the water charge based on the latest actual water usage. In the case of last years bill Housing NSW paid approximately \$25 million for water and received \$23 million from its tenants.

9. Exactly how many residential rental properties does Housing NSW have in its portfolio, state-wide, to date?

**ANSWER:**

9. Detailed information concerning Housing NSW properties is contained in the Annual Report.

### ***Social and Affordable Housing Stock***

10. Given the massive decline in new social housing compared to population growth and current record levels of housing unaffordability, is Housing NSW's program of new builds adequate, or should it be significantly increased?

#### **ANSWER:**

10. Details of Housing NSW's capital supply program is contained in its Annual Report.

11. Will Landcom increase its component of housing at more affordable prices for sale, provided they are sold to a pool of buyers who are on moderate incomes?

#### **ANSWER:**

11. This matter should be directed to my colleague the Minister for Planning for a response.

### ***Guttering used by Housing NSW***

12. Are you aware that new guttering now being used in housing can lead to overflow and water getting into the house cavities?

13. Are you aware that some plumbers believe this guttering, when installed according to the manufacturer's instructions, may not comply with the Building Codes of Australia?

14. Which manufacturers supply Housing NSW's new or replacement guttering?

#### **ANSWER:**

12, 13 & 14 - Any manufacturer can supply guttering provided it meets Housing NSW requirements for robustness, longevity, cost and functionality, including fail safe overflowing away from the building.

15. Is Housing NSW ensuring that its new guttering allows for adequate drainage?

#### **ANSWER:**

15. Yes

### ***Street-based sex workers***

16. What funds are being allocated for programs to enable street-based sex workers to break the cycle of homelessness and move out of the sex industry where they desire to do so?

**ANSWER:**

16. Housing NSW does not provide funding for programs directly to this client group.

Housing NSW does however fund the Inner-City Homelessness Outreach and Support Service (I-CHOSS) which provides outreach and support services to homeless people across the City of Sydney local government area.

Further, Housing NSW is an active member of the Kings Cross Youth at Risk Steering Committee. The Kings Cross Youth at Risk Project assists young people in emergency situations to access appropriate services to reduce their immediate risk. There is some evidence to suggest that a proportion of these youths may be sex workers.

***Infrastructure Fund and Aboriginal Housing***

17. What steps, if any, are being taken by the NSW Government to ensure this State receives a fair share of the Commonwealth's \$20 billion Infrastructure Fund?

**ANSWER:**

17. This matter should be directed to my colleague the Premier for a response.

18. What steps, if any, are being taken to ensure a priority call will be made on these funds for the unmet infrastructure need in discrete Aboriginal communities in this State, especially given the fact that NSWALC has had to commit more than \$100 million of Aboriginal compensation monies to assist the Government fix up the appalling water and sewerage services in Aboriginal communities?

**ANSWER:**

18. This matter should be directed to my colleague the Premier for a response.

***Maintenance Contracts***

19. It was reported that Housing NSW has extended its contract with Transfield, and that Transfield will be managing 40 per cent of Housing NSW's maintenance portfolio. Which companies will be managing the other 60%?

**ANSWER:**

19. The awarding of new maintenance contracts to successful tenderers includes qualified and experienced organisations across NSW. They are:

Transfield  
Spotless

Lake Maintenance  
PJS Building  
RTC Facilities Management  
Programmed Maintenance Service

***Purchase of private units in Shoalhaven area***

20. Former Housing Minister Matt Brown authorised the purchase of a block of units in his own electorate, causing the eviction of amongst others, a single parent shift worker, Tracy Evinson from the private rental complex. How much was the block of units purchased for, and how much was spent on refurbishments?

**ANSWER:**

20. Housing NSW has purchased a number of properties in the Kiama electorate in order to meet social housing demand. Without an address being provided, it is difficult to ascertain which block is referred to in the question. Ms Hale may wish to provide additional information to assist in answering the question more fully.

21. Did Housing NSW consider a new build instead of buying up already-existing housing being used for private rental? If not, why not?

**ANSWER:**

21. Housing NSW will always consider the most appropriate and cost effective method of new supply to improve the match of housing to client need. Housing NSW has extensive need for one and two bedroom villas and units and therefore purchase is sometimes the best option.

***Smart Meters***

22. What percentage of Housing NSW stock now have Smart Meters for electricity installed? What is the timetable for the installation of Smart Meters across all your properties?

**ANSWER:**

22. Housing NSW has Smart Meters in offices and common areas. Smart Meters have been included in those Housing NSW properties that are part of the Blacktown Solar Cities Program. Information on other residential properties is not available as it is an agreement between the tenant and the electricity supplier.

***Hurstville Office***

23. Are you aware of concerns that there are serious and endemic problems in both the Hurstville and Miranda Offices of Housing NSW?

**ANSWER:**

23. In the absence of specific complaints, Housing NSW is unable to provide a response. Ms Hale may wish to provide additional information.

### ***Leasehold Housing Ownership***

24. What is Housing NSW's position on building houses on state-owned land, with moderate-income buyers owning the building – often a third or less of the total value of the house and land – while the State retains the land under a leasehold arrangement?

#### **ANSWER:**

24. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) has recently conducted research into innovative financing for home ownership, with a particular emphasis on shared equity initiatives. The outcomes of that research will be used to inform the work of the NSW Government and the other States and Territories.

25. Is Housing NSW aware of the ACT Government's initiatives on such leasehold schemes?

#### **ANSWER:**

25. Yes

26. Could Landcom offer a similar form of housing on leasehold land?

#### **ANSWER:**

26. This matter should be directed to my colleague the Minister for Planning for a response.

### ***Community Housing***

27. The Government said it was considering introducing long term leases for community housing properties, designed to give providers a steady income stream to support borrowing that can be used to build affordable housing. Has this commenced, or if not, when will it commence.

#### **ANSWER:**

27. Two Community Housing Organisations were selected to participate in this initiative following a tender process. The community housing properties that will be subject to the long term leases have been identified and financial and legal arrangements are being finalised.

28. OCH will expect community housing providers to be more financially self-sufficient. How much extra funding is to come from the tenants themselves, because of the decision to change rents in order to capture a greater proportion of Commonwealth Rent Assistance?

**ANSWER:**

28. These changes will generate an estimated \$23 million extra rental income per year for community housing providers across NSW.

The funds will be reinvested back into housing. They will be used to provide better maintained dwellings for people already living in community housing as well as more responsive services. The additional funds will also be used by community housing providers to build or buy more homes for families in need.

Increases in tenant contribution towards rent will be limited to \$10 per week in any one year as a result of the new rent arrangements.

**QUESTIONS FROM MR CLARKE**

***Affordable Housing***

29 a. What plans are there to increase the benefits available to first homebuyers under the First Home Plus Scheme now that the Federal Government has increased benefits under the First Home Owners Scheme until 30 June, 2009?

b. What were the total benefits made available under the First Home Plus Scheme during the last year?

c. What were the 5 leading local government areas, in which properties were purchased and benefits made available under the First Home Plus Scheme?

d. Last year, the former Premier announced that he was reviewing Government charges. What were the department's submissions to Treasury and the Premier for a reduction in charges, which are up to 35% of the purchase price of a basic land and house package?

e. Many lower paid essential workers such as Police, Ambulance, Council workers and School Teachers can no longer afford to live in the areas like the inner city, yet the residents of these areas need these workers. What action has the department taken to assist low paid essential workers to live within a reasonable distance of high cost residential areas?

**ANSWER:**

29. a, b & c – These matters should be directed to my colleague the Treasurer for a response.

29. d. Not applicable to Housing NSW core business.

29. e. The NSW Government established the Affordable Housing Innovations Fund to provide grants to registered community housing providers that contribute equity and debt finance to deliver new affordable housing projects. The NSW Government has also supported the Establishment Phase of the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

### ***Mortgage Assistance***

30.a. What plans are there to increase the total amount available under the Mortgage Assistance Scheme during this period of unprecedented economic uncertainty?

b. How many applicants were there for mortgage assistance during the last year?

c. How many applicants were assisted during the last year?

30.d. How many applicants were declined during the last year and for what reasons?

e. What was the total amount lent by the scheme to borrowers during the year?

f. How much money remained available to lend at 30 June, 2008?

#### **ANSWER:**

30 a, b, c, e & f – Detailed information on the Mortgage Assistance Scheme is included in Housing NSW's Annual Report and on its website.

#### **ANSWER:**

30. d. Housing NSW's website explains the application process. Applications are declined for a range of reasons for example:

- The amount owing on the mortgage must be less than \$350,000
- The value of the home must be less than \$500,000
- Household income must be less than \$90,000
- Financial difficulties must be serious and caused by an unavoidable change of circumstances.

### ***Bonnyrigg***

31 a. How many more disadvantaged families would be able to obtain public housing if the department maintained the ratio of 89% public and 11% private housing, which applied in the Bonnyrigg Estate, rather than increasing the private housing component to 69% in the new project?

b. Why are a further 134 homes being purchased for public tenants in Bonnyrigg and adjacent suburbs, to achieve the former total of 833 public housing homes, rather than including the 134 homes in the total of 2230 to be constructed?

c. When will the additional 134 homes be purchased and how much has been allocated for their purchase?

#### **ANSWER:**

31. a, b & c - The amount of public housing on the estate is being reduced to improve the social mix. In order to maintain public housing numbers at the original 833, an additional 134 properties will be provided off the estate. The dwellings to be built or acquired will be sourced from various Western Sydney local government areas. These dwellings are part of the total package of facilities and services being provided



by Bonnyrigg Partnerships under the Bonnyrigg PPP. They are planned to be provided from 2013 to 2020.

### ***Tenant Fraud Amnesty***

32. a. When is it expected that the amnesty calls investigation will be completed?
- b. How much money is expected to be recovered as a result of the amnesty and how does this compare with the \$53m annual losses from the fraud?
- c. What was the cost of the amnesty?
- d. What percentage of public housing tenants does the department believe are committing fraud in relation to the information which they have provided to the department?

### **ANSWER:**

32. a. Most allegations have now been completed. Those allegations that warrant further investigation will be completed as soon as possible. The final timing is dependent upon the strength of the evidence uncovered and the appropriate action to be taken (for example criminal prosecution, civil action, CTTT action or other Housing NSW action).
32. b. At this stage it is not possible for Housing NSW to estimate this figure as all matters are not yet finalised.
32. c. Costs were absorbed from within existing resources for this project.
32. d. It is impossible for Housing NSW to estimate this figure. Once it has finalised all amnesty matters and undertaken the first round of data matching audits with other government agencies Housing NSW will have more reliable data.

### ***Homelessness***

- 33.a. Housing of the socially disadvantaged in our community is included in the housing portfolio. Is it considered to be an important component of the portfolio?

### **ANSWER**

33. a. Yes.
33. b. Is it conceded, that in view of the extent of homelessness, the Commonwealth government's "A Place to Call Home" strategy, whilst "heading in the right direction", does not even scratch the surface of this enormous social problem?

### **ANSWER**

33. b. The NSW Government welcomes the Commonwealth's *A Place To Call Home* strategy and the 155 additional homes. Housing NSW can always make good use of additional resources.

33.c. How many homes will be completed by June, 2009 as part of this strategy and what plans are there to extend the programme?

### **ANSWER**

During 2008/09, NSW will deliver 25 new public, community and Aboriginal community housing dwellings under *A Place To Call Home*. The remainder will be delivered over the five-year program.

33.d. How many people are, at the latest count, living on the streets of Sydney?

### **ANSWER**

33. d. The 2006 Census counted 3,559 people in Australia who were sleeping in improvised dwellings, i.e. sleeping rough. Within the Sydney Local Government Area, 339 rough sleepers were counted during the Census.

33.e. How often does the department do a count?

### **ANSWER**

33. e. It is not Housing NSW's responsibility to count the number of homeless people. However, Housing NSW receives updated data from a range of agencies including Supported Accommodation Assistance Program data, census data, data from the City of Sydney, various non-government organisations and its own data from the Temporary Accommodation Program.

33.f. What checks are made that these people have welfare assistance?

33.g. Is there a team to meet them and see if they need emergency accommodation? If not, why not?

### **ANSWER**

33. f. & g. Housing NSW's *Corporate Plan 2007/08–2009/10* identifies homelessness as the first outcome to be addressed along the continuum of housing need. Housing NSW has a number of programs and strategies, aimed at improving the access that homeless people have to housing, and is working in partnership with other key stakeholders to address the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. For example the Inner City Outreach and Support Service funded by Housing NSW provides advocacy services and makes referrals for clients to other appropriate support services. Further details on other homelessness programs are contained in Housing NSW's Annual Report.

33.h. Has the Minister gone out personally with the Salvation Army or the St Vincent's de Paul Society? If so, when did this happen? If not, why not? After all, they're across the road in Martin Place every day.

**ANSWER**

33. h. I have met with representatives from both organisations on various issues and will continue to have ongoing discussions on the important issue of homelessness.

33. i. The homeless used to sleep in the window gardens of Parliament House located between Parliament House and the State Library and also on the walkway. What's happened to those people now that Parliament has put barriers in the gardens to stop them sleeping there? What enquiries have been made?

**ANSWER:**

33. i. The Inner City Homeless Outreach and Support Service and the City of Sydney advise that these barriers were erected within the State Library in 2005. There are a range of facilities and services to assist these people.

33.j. How many people were accommodated in emergency accommodation last year who would be regarded as street people?

**ANSWER:**

33. j. Housing NSW provides Temporary Accommodation for people who are homeless or in housing crisis while they make longer-term arrangements. Further information can be found in Housing NSW's Annual Report. Information on the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program should be sought from my colleague the Minister for Community Services.

33.k. How much financial assistance is being provided to the Salvation Army and other refuge centres by the Department, this year? If this funding is via DOCS, what representations have been made to ensure that DOCS is focused on this issue?

**ANSWER:**

33. k. The Salvation Army leases a number of properties from Housing NSW for different programs.

Refuge centres are generally funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program administered by the Department of Community Services.

***Public and Community Housing***

34 a. What impact will next month's Mini-budget have on this capital programme, which was outlined in the budget?

**ANSWER:**

34. a. There will be no impact on frontline services. Savings will be found from corporate and administrative areas.

34.b. How many homes will commence construction and how many will be completed in the following areas?

- i. Central Sydney
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Hunter
- iv. Northern Region
- v. South Eastern Region
- vi. South Western Region
- vii. Western Region
- viii. Western Sydney

**ANSWER:**

34. b. In 2008/09 the number of properties to commence construction and to be completed across the State are 893 commencements and 813 completions.

34.c. How many homes in the portfolio were sold during last year in the above areas?

34. c. i) How many homes in the portfolio were sold on the open market during the last year, in these same areas and what was the market value of the homes sold?

34.c (iii) What was the total amount received from sales during the last year from sales on the open market and sales to public tenants, in each of the areas?

**ANSWER:**

34. c. & c (i) & (iii) The number of properties sold in the portfolio during the last year and the proceeds from these sales is contained in Housing NSW's Annual Report. Independent market valuations are used to set prices for disposal. Under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, all proceeds from the sale of properties are re-invested into providing housing assistance.

34.c. ii) How many homes in the portfolio were sold to public tenants during the last year, in these same areas and what was the market value of the homes sold?

**ANSWER:**

34.c. ii) 56 properties.

34.c.iv). What is the basis of the decision to sell homes from the portfolio?

**ANSWER:**

34. c. (iv) Housing NSW sells properties when they do not meet the needs of its clients or are not economical to maintain or are no longer in a suitable location for

clients. Other reasons include the need to sometimes breakdown the concentration of public housing in a particular area, or because a tenant wishes to buy the property they are living in.

34. d. How many people were on the public housing waiting listing at 30 September, 2008, in the following areas?

- i. Central Sydney
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Hunter
- iv. Northern Region
- v. South Eastern Region
- vi. South Western Region
- vii. Western Region
- viii. Western Sydney
- ix. and how do these figures compare with the previous year?

**ANSWER:**

34. d. A housing register is maintained to allocate housing to eligible applicants. The number of people listed on the state-wide housing register in June 2008 was 43,134. This is a decrease of 1,736 falling from 44,870 at the end of June 2007.

34.e. What is the waiting time for properties in the Eastern Suburbs compared to that of the Western Suburbs?

**ANSWER:**

34. e. The time an applicant spends on the housing register varies and changes constantly. Many factors influence how long each applicant waits including the location sought, the type of accommodation sought (e.g. number of bedrooms, style of dwelling); the type of household (e.g. aged couple, single person); and special needs (e.g. ground floor requirements, modifications).

34.f. At the current level of construction and of people vacating their tenancies, how long will it take to satisfy the waiting list?

**ANSWER:**

34. f. This cannot be predicted because the number of people on the housing register varies and changes constantly.

34.g. How many homes in the portfolio are heritage listed?

34.g. i) How much is the annual maintenance cost on these homes?

34.g.ii) What is the current rent received for the heritage listed homes in the portfolio?

34.g.iii) What is the current market rent for these properties?

**ANSWER:**

34 g. (i), (ii) & (iii) Housing NSW has 7,749 heritage listed properties. These properties tend to be expensive to maintain, given the heritage requirements and nature of the properties. Repairs and planned maintenance expenditure varies according to the state and condition of the property. Rent received for these properties is dependant on the household income of the tenants. Housing NSW's market rents are benchmarked against comparative private market properties, in terms of property type, size, location, amenity and condition.

34.g. iv) How many heritage-listed homes were sold last year and how many are currently for sale?

**ANSWER:**

34. g. (iv) 6 were sold last year none are currently listed for sale.

34.g. v) How many leases of heritage-listed homes were sold last year and how many are currently for sale?

**ANSWER:**

None were listed last year and 2 are currently for sale.

34.h. How many housing properties does the Department own valued at \$1 million or more as at 30 September 2008 and where are they located?

34.h.i) What is the rent collected on these properties?

34.h.(ii) What is the expected market rent of these properties?

**ANSWER**

34. h. (i) & (ii) 17 properties located in the inner city, eastern suburbs of Sydney and the lower north shore area. Rent received for these properties is dependant on the household income of the tenants. Housing NSW's market rents are benchmarked against comparative private market properties, in terms of property type, size, location, amenity and condition.

34.h.iii) How long has the Department owned these properties?

**ANSWER:**

34. h. (iii) These properties were bought or transferred to Housing NSW in the 1980's and 1990's.

34.h.iv) What are the annual strata fees and annual council rates of these properties?

**ANSWER:**

Council rates vary for individual councils. These properties are not generally strata titled.

34.h.v) Are all of these properties tenanted, if so, which ones and for how long have the current tenants been there?

**ANSWER**

Some properties are tenanted and others are used for crisis accommodation or house high needs clients. The length of tenancy varies.

34.i. How many properties valued at over \$800,000 has the department acquired in the last 2 years and where are they located?

**ANSWER:**

34. i. Housing NSW has purchased 6 properties purchased in the last two years that are valued over \$800,000. These properties are in high need locations for social housing. These properties include Crisis Accommodation refuges and vacant land for development.

34.j. How many incidences of graffiti were experienced on Department homes, during the last year?

**ANSWER:**

34.j. Housing NSW issued 1650 graffiti related orders during the 2007-08 financial year.

34.j.(i) What was the cost of removing the graffiti?

**ANSWER:**

34. j. (i) Housing NSW issued work to the value of \$351,829 for graffiti removal in 2007-08 financial year.

34.j.(ii) What action is being taken to eliminate or reduce the incidence of graffiti?

34.j.(iii) Does the Department have an anti-graffiti taskforce?

34.j.(iv) If there is a taskforce, what is its annual cost?

34.j.(v) If there is no taskforce, why isn't there one?

**ANSWER:**

34. j. (ii), (iii), (iv) & (v) - Across the State, there are several strategies in place to address this issue. Each local area has its own strategy, which include partnerships with government and non-government agencies, the community and local councils. Examples of these strategies include community murals/ mosaics' being developed in places which were traditionally used for graffiti; community clean up days where community members get involved in the removal of graffiti. Other strategies include working with local handypersons and the police.

34.k. How many public tenants were discovered drug dealing from their Department homes, during the year?

**ANSWER:**

34. k. 50

34.k.i) On how many occasions were charges laid against public tenants for drug dealing?

**ANSWER:**

34. k. (i) 50

34.k.ii) What action did the Department take in each of the incidences, regarding the public tenants' leases?

**ANSWER:**

34. k. (ii) Depending on the nature of the offence a range of actions are taken that includes termination of the lease and possession of the property.

34.k.iii) How many public housing estates have secure needle disposal units installed similar to those installed in the Pacific Del Mar Estate, Tumbi Umbi?

34.k.iv) What is the annual cost of these secure needle disposal units?

**ANSWER:**

34. k. (iii) & (iv) - This is a NSW Health matter and should be directed to my colleague the Minister for Health.

34.l. How many public tenants were in arrears with their rent as at 30 September, 2008?

34.l.i) What was the total amount in arrears at this time in each of these areas:-?

1. Central Sydney
2. Central Coast
3. Hunter
4. Northern Region
5. South Eastern Region
6. South Western Region
7. Western Region
8. Western Sydney

**ANSWER:**

34. l & (i) In the 2007/08 financial year, the amount of rent payable was \$622.3 million. Rent arrears at year end were 0.49% of rent payable. There were 10,427 tenancies in rent arrears representing less than one in every twelve tenancies.

34.l.ii) What action is being taken to recover the rental arrears?



## **ANSWER**

34. l. (ii) Housing NSW recovers rental arrears in accordance with the rental and water arrears policy which includes the following:

- If tenants fall behind in their rent Housing NSW will send them a letter within one week of the rent being overdue.
- Housing NSW will consider suitable arrangements with tenants to repay rental arrears.
- Approaching the CTTT for an order compelling the tenant to pay.
- Not paying rent can impact on a decision to renew the tenant's lease when it expires.
- Major or serious rent arrears will result in Housing NSW undertaking eviction.

34.m) How many public tenants are in the Bidwill Housing Estate?

## **ANSWER:**

34. m. 937

34.m.i) What action is being undertaken to reduce the level of crime and anti-social behaviour including the incidence of graffiti and property damage, which has escalated in recent years, in the Bidwill Housing Estate?

## **ANSWER:**

34. m. (i) Graffiti:

- BoysTown presently holds a 12 month contract for a Pilot Graffiti Removal Project based in Bidwill, Blackett and Shalvey. Under the contract BoysTown is required to employ Indigenous social housing youth. Graffiti has noticeably lessened or is absent.

Crime and antisocial behaviour:

- A two pronged approach has been taken to address levels of crime and antisocial behaviour in the area. The first is structural work on properties and the next is a non-asset approach.
- Structural work has included the acquisition and rezoning of open space for residential purposes, construction of new roads, parks and reserves, reversal and upgrading of "Radburn" style dwellings in Bidwill, and the relocation of services infrastructure i.e. storm water, gas, electricity and telephone lines.
- Non-asset strategies include the appointment of Anti-Social Behaviour Specialists to work with local staff to build their capacity to successfully address incidents of anti-social behaviour; and a Community Access Centre operating in Bidwill which supports residents through a range of community development and training opportunities.

Property Damage:

- Given the extent of upgrading undertaken in Bidwill, the community development activities delivered to residents, proactive partnerships with government and community service agencies and the positive graffiti program, fewer incidents of property damage to Housing NSW properties are evident across the suburb.

- Property damage has noticeably occurred in a private housing development opposite the Bidwill Hotel and newly renovated shopping centre.

34 n. In view of the Premier's announcement of a reduction of 20% in SES personnel, across the Public Service:-

- How many SES personnel are there in the Department?
- How many SES personnel will be retrenched?
- What is the annual cost of SES personnel in the Department?
- What will the retrenchment cost be for the Department?

**ANSWER:**

34. n (i – iv) Information regarding Housing NSW's SES employees is contained in the Annual Report.

34 o. Has the Minister been asked to introduce a cost saving programme by Treasury? If so:-

- What percentage of costs are incorporated in the cost saving programme?
- Where are the cost savings targeted?
- Has the cost saving programme commenced?
- What is the total value of the cost saving programme for the Department?

**ANSWER:**

34. o. (i – iv) In common with other agencies, NSW Treasury has provided Housing NSW with efficiency dividend targets, which are met by internal cost savings and other agency specific initiatives. Targets are based on Housing NSW Consolidated Fund allocations and are not directly correlated to the agency's internal cost base. Efficiency dividend targets commenced in 2005-06, escalate each year and are ongoing.

34 p. What was the breakdown of people, who unsuccessfully requested public housing in the year to 30 September 2008 in:-

- Central Sydney
- Central Coast
- Hunter
- Northern Region
- South Eastern Region
- South Western Region
- Western Region
- Western Sydney
- How do these figures compare to the previous year?

**ANSWER**

34. p (i - ix) Housing NSW provides housing assistance for people on low incomes living in NSW who have a housing need. Public housing is a scarce resource and to make sure that housing is allocated to those who are most in need and can least afford accommodation in the private market each applicant for public housing must meet certain eligibility criteria.

To be eligible to be admitted to the Housing Register, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a citizen or have permanent residency in Australia
- Be resident in NSW
- Establish their identity
- Have a household income within the income eligibility limits
- Comply with the Housing NSW policy on asset ownership
- Be able to sustain a successful tenancy (with or without support)
- If a former tenant, make repayments of any former debts to Housing NSW
- Generally, be at least 18 years of age.

For the last 12 months, the number of people who did not meet the eligibility criteria to be placed on the Housing Register was 6,000. The figure is higher than last year.

34.q. How many additional single person units of accommodation were created in 2007/2008?

34.r. How many additional two person units of accommodation were created in 2007/2008?

34.s. How many additional three or more person units of accommodation were created in 2007/2008?

34.t. In each case how many were built and how many were purchased?

**ANSWER:**

34. (q–t) Housing NSW's Annual Report provides details of its capital supply program that details capital works expenditure, dwelling commencements and dwelling completions.

34.u. At what age can someone request public housing?

34.u.i) Are there any recorded incidences of a person requesting public housing at the age of 17 years or under?

**ANSWER:**

34. u. & (i) - Usually over the age of 18 however, under 18s are accepted if they meet the eligibility criteria and have their own income. The public trustee or a solicitor must also explain the agreement to the minor.

34.u.ii) Is there any connection with the children of public housing tenants seeking public housing themselves?

**ANSWER:**

34. u (ii) In certain cases children may succeed the tenancy of their parent.

34.u.iii) How many public housing tenants are currently serving a gaol sentence? In the case of each of those tenants how long has each of them been in gaol?

**ANSWER:**

34. u (iii) As 30 September 2008 there were 169 tenants who were in custody. Gaol terms vary for each tenant.

34.u.iv) What was the number of people assisted seeking crisis accommodation in the year ending September 30, 2008 in:-

1. Regional NSW
2. Central Coast
3. Metropolitan Sydney
4. Newcastle/Hunter
5. Wollongong/Illawarra

34.u.v) What was the total cost? And what is the estimated number for this coming year?

**ANSWER:**

34 u. (iv) & (v) The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) funds support services to clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and in crisis. SAAP is administered by the Department of Community Services and would be more appropriately answered by my colleague the Minister for Community Services.

The Crisis Accommodation Program administered by Housing NSW provides funding to provide properties for non-government agencies to be used for crisis and/or transitional accommodation. Details on this Program are included in Housing NSW's Annual Report.

34. v. What is the number of Public Housing, Community Housing and Crisis Accommodation properties currently held by the Department as at 30 September 2008?

**ANSWER**

34. v. This information is contained in the Annual Report of Housing NSW.

34.v.i) What is the breakdown of how many apartments, townhouses and units?

**ANSWER**

34. v. (i) Housing NSW has a range of property types within its portfolio. The largest number are cottages (approximately 53,000) and units (approximately 56,000). Housing NSW has smaller numbers of villas, townhouses and terraces.

34.v.ii) Of those how many are currently tenanted as at 30 September 2008?

**ANSWER**

34. v. (ii) The number of Housing NSW properties that are vacant in any area changes on a daily basis as houses are vacated by tenants, are cleaned and repaired ready for the next tenant, as is required under the Residential Tenancies Act

and are then re-occupied. Generally, the vacancy rate of public housing is lower than that of the private rental sector at any given time.

34.v.iii) How many of those are paying market rent as at 30 September 2008 in:-

1. Regional NSW
2. Central Coast
3. Metropolitan Sydney
4. Newcastle/Hunter
5. Wollongong/Illawarra

34.v.iv) How many are not paying market rent?

### **ANSWER**

34. v. (iii) & (iv) Housing NSW charges the market rent for all its properties. Tenants who demonstrate they cannot afford the market rent are entitled to a reduced rent. The amount of the reduction is their rent subsidy. Around 90% of tenancies receive a rent subsidy and the rest pay the market rent.

34.v. (v) What is the criteria for determining market rent? Who does this?

### **ANSWER**

34. v. (v) Market rent is determined using the same criteria as used in the broader residential rental market. Qualified valuers are engaged by Housing NSW to provide market rent estimates by visiting over 3,000 existing dwellings across the State. For each dwelling visited the valuers are asked to also estimate the market rent for five variations of bedroom accommodation on the same site and for the same type of dwelling. From this comes a matrix of 18,000 market rents with adjustments for car parking, brick finishes, yard size etc. The market rent calculations and any reviews are undertaken by Housing NSW using the services of qualified valuers from the Department of Lands and the private sector.

34.w. How many properties were vacant as at 30 September 2008 in:-

- i. Central Sydney
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Hunter
- iv. Northern Region
- v. South Eastern Region
- vi. South Western Region
- vii. Western Region
- viii. Western Sydney

### **ANSWER**

34. w. The number of Housing NSW properties that are vacant in any area changes on a daily basis as houses are vacated by tenants, are cleaned and repaired ready for the next tenant, as is required under the Residential Tenancies Act and are then re-occupied. Generally, the vacancy rate of public housing is lower than that of the private rental sector at any given time.

34.x. What is the estimated value of the Department's properties as at 30 September 2008, in:-

- i. Central Sydney
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Hunter
- iv. Northern Region
- v. South Eastern Region
- vi. South Western Region
- vii. Western Region
- viii. Western Sydney

**ANSWER**

Details of Housing NSW's assets are included in the Annual Report. The value of properties varies in each area in accordance with the housing market. For example Housing NSW properties in central Sydney are valued at more than properties in western Sydney and properties in western NSW are even less.

34x.ix. How often are they valued?

**ANSWER**

Annually.

34.y. Does the Department hold land with no housing on it as at 30 September 2008? If so, where and what is its value?

**ANSWER**

34. y. Housing NSW holds some land located in various parts of NSW including metropolitan, regional and rural areas. The value of this land is approximately 1% of Housing NSW's total property asset value.

34.z. What is the total income from all of the Department's properties as at 30 September 2008?

**ANSWER**

34. z. Details of net rental income and tenancy charges is contained in Housing NSW's Annual Report.

***Maintenance backlog***

35. a. What is the level of maintenance backlog as at 30 September 2008 in:-

- i. Western Sydney
- ii. Northern Beaches
- iii. Central Coast
- iv. Newcastle / Hunter
- v. Wollongong / Illawarra
- vi. South Eastern Sydney

**ANSWER:**

35. a. The level of maintenance backlog varies across property types and locations and will take approximately 7 years under the new maintenance contracts to address.

35.b. What is the expected waiting period for requested maintenance as at 30 September 2008, in:-

- i. Western Sydney
- ii. Northern Beaches
- iii. Central Coast
- iv. Newcastle / Hunter
- v. Wollongong / Illawarra
- vi. South Eastern Sydney

**ANSWER:**

35. b. All maintenance is carried out on a needs basis, if an item is urgent and affects health, safety or security then it is carried out urgently in some cases within four hours, if it is not urgent then it is carried out in a planned maintenance regime and will depend on the nature of the maintenance required.

35.c. What is the total expenditure on maintenance for these properties as at 30 September 2008?

**ANSWER:**

35. c. Repairs and maintenance expenditure is detailed in Housing NSW's Annual Report.

35.d. What is the expected waiting period for cyclical maintenance as at 30 September 2008? For example, how often are kitchens, bathrooms, carpet, interior/exterior paint replaced in:-

- i. Western Sydney
- ii. Northern Beaches
- iii. Central Coast
- iv. Newcastle / Hunter
- v. Wollongong / Illawarra
- vi. South Eastern Sydney

**ANSWER:**

35. d. Replacement of items is dependent on the condition of the item rather than being a fixed period. The new maintenance contract introduces life cycle planning for such items but still defers to an assessment of condition to ensure the maximum life for individual items is fully realised. For items such as painting it is again guided by the condition of the paint in each specific circumstance but tends to be more cyclical.

For high failure rate items such as tap washers the asset dwelling service pre-empts failure by replacing such minor items if judged to be near the end of their useful life.

35.e. Is there a sub-maintenance schedule to replace things like kitchen benchtops, flyscreens, gutters, etc...?

**ANSWER:**

Yes.

35.f. Are there criteria for the cycle of maintenance?

**ANSWER:**

35. f. The criteria for the cycle of maintenance is a combination of what the life cycle planning indicates compared to the actual regular measuring of condition of the items in each property.

35.g. Have any Public Housing tenants been forced to pay for repairs to their property caused by themselves? How many in the year to 30 September 2008?

**ANSWER**

35. g. Yes, people are asked to pay for damage to properties that is not considered fair wear and tear. This may include items such as broken windows (where the client or a visitor has caused the damage), lost keys, holes in walls and doors. The number of incidents reported for the 2007/08 financial year was approximately 2,500.

35.h. How is this enforced? Is it the same for those on Government assistance compared to those that are employed?

**ANSWER**

35. h. In determining if a client is liable for damages an investigation is conducted by inspecting the damage, interviewing the client, and reviewing reports from contractors. Further information on tenant damage is contained in the fact sheet on Housing NSW's website.

35.i. Has the concept of programmed maintenance being used by the department in the past or is it being introduced now for the first time?

**ANSWER**

35. i. There has been some pre-emptive maintenance for items such as smoke alarms that require regular servicing. This is the first time a full program of works has been compiled and a regular pre-emptive maintenance visit incorporated as part of the overall concept. Work was undertaken previously on an "as reported" basis.

***Vandalism***

36. a. How many tenanted properties were vandalised in the year to 30 September 2008 in:-

- i. Central Sydney
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Hunter
- iv. Northern Region
- v. South Eastern Region
- vi. South Western Region



- vii. Western Region
- viii. Western Sydney

**ANSWER**

36. a. Approximately 1%.

36.b. How many vacant properties were vandalised in the year to 30 September 2008 in:-

- i. Central Sydney
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Hunter
- iv. Northern Region
- v. South Eastern Region
- vi. South Western Region
- vii. Western Region
- viii. Western Sydney

**ANSWER**

36.b. Approximately 0.7%.

36.c. How many public housing tenants that caused deliberate damage to their property such as, fire, water or structural damage and are still located in public housing 2007/08 in:-

- i. Central Sydney
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Hunter
- iv. Northern Region
- v. South Eastern Region
- vi. South Western Region
- vii. Western Region
- viii. Western Sydney

**ANSWER:**

36. c. No public housing tenants who have been shown to deliberately cause structural or other severe damage to their properties are still located in those tenancies.

36.d. Is cyclical maintenance ever refused on a public housing property due to a tenant's bad record of vandalism and/or property maintenance?

**ANSWER:**

36. d. No, but options are available to take action to recover associated costs if necessary.

36.e. Have any tenants been evicted or refused further public housing because of their record of vandalism to their public housing property in 2007/08?

**ANSWER:**

36. e. Yes.

36.f. How many tenants were evicted from public housing during the year ending 30 September 2008 for non payment of rent, in:-

- i. Central Sydney
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Hunter
- iv. Northern Region
- v. South Eastern Region
- vi. South Western Region
- vii. Western Region
- viii. Western Sydney
- ix. How do these evictions relate to the figures for the previous year?

**ANSWER:**

36. f. As a landlord, Housing NSW complies with the Residential Tenancies Act. Similarly, public housing tenants must keep to the terms and conditions of their Tenancy Agreement and meet their responsibilities under Housing NSW's tenancy policies. Housing NSW will only take eviction action when all other reasonable options have been exhausted or if the breach is extremely serious. Where possible, Housing NSW will assist tenants to rectify a breach and maintain their tenancy. In 2007/08 Housing NSW evicted a total of 186 tenants for rent arrears. This figure is less than last year.

***Consultancies***

37. a. How many consultancies have commenced in the year to 30 September 2008?

b. To whom were consulting fees paid and how much was paid to each person or company?

**ANSWER:**

37 a & b - Information regarding Housing NSW's consultancies is contained in the Annual Report.

***Subletting***

38.a. How many complaints did the Department receive regarding tenants subletting their properties in 2007/08 in;

- i. Central Sydney
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Hunter
- iv. Northern Region
- v. South Eastern Region
- vi. South Western Region
- vii. Western Region
- viii. Western Sydney

**ANSWER:**

38. a. 25

38.b. How many people have been investigated for subletting in 2007/08 in:-

- i. Central Sydney
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Hunter
- iv. Northern Region
- v. South Eastern Region
- vi. South Western Region
- vii. Western Region
- viii. Western Sydney

**ANSWER**

38. b. All matters are investigated where there is substantial evidence.

***Private leasing***

39.a. How many properties does the Department lease from the private sector as at 30 September 2008 in:-

- i. Central Sydney
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Hunter
- iv. Northern Region
- v. South Eastern Region
- vi. South Western region
- vii. Western Region
- viii. Western Sydney?

**ANSWER**

39. a. Details of the number of properties headleased by Housing NSW is contained in the Annual Report.

39.b. How many of these properties leased by the Department are valued at over \$500 per week?

**ANSWER**

Approximately 1% of properties with almost all located in Sydney.

39.c. What is the rent paid by the tenants on these properties?

**ANSWER:**

39.c. The amount of rent paid depends on household income.

39.d. What is the total cost to the Department of leasing from the private sector?

**ANSWER**

39. d. Housing NSW leases properties from the private rental market to supplement existing public housing where the current available public housing properties are not suitable for a particular tenant's need. The cost to Housing NSW of leasing from the private sector varies according to the size and location of the property.

39.e. Are there any circumstances in which a public housing tenant would be asked/forced to find alternative accommodation within the private sector without assistance?

**ANSWER:**

39. e. Tenants may be forced to leave as a result of an eviction or end of a fixed term lease. All clients are provided with information on how to access the private rental market. Some clients may also be eligible for financial assistance to secure private rental.

39.e. i) Is there a cap on how much a public housing tenant can earn?

**ANSWER:**

39. e. (i) Yes.

39.e. ii) If they were to go over that limit, would they be given notice to find alternative housing in the private sector?

**ANSWER:**

39. e. (ii) Tenants on fixed term leases undergo a lease review nine months before the end of their lease. If their income is over the required limit they will not be eligible for a lease renewal.

Tenants that are on a continuous lease would not be asked to leave. They would however pay market rent for their property.

***Departmental Staff***

40 a. What measures are taken to counsel staff in dealing with difficult persons?

**ANSWER:**

40. a. Staff members who have experienced a traumatic event after dealing with a difficult person are encouraged to make use of the professional counselling and support provided under Housing NSW's Employee Assistance Program. In addition, as part of regular client service team meetings, Occupational Health and Safety concerns are discussed, including experiences team members have had dealing with difficult clients and how outcomes have been effectively managed, including any lessons which could be passed on to other team members. There are also policies and procedures in place to ensure staff and client health and safety when staff are

meeting difficult clients and adherence to these protocols is monitored by Team Leaders and senior managers.

40. b. What training do staff receive to assist them in dealing with difficult people? Is it ongoing?

**ANSWER:**

40. b. All client service staff receive training as part of their initial induction to Housing NSW. This training includes a range of techniques to manage and deal with difficult clients with a focus on harm minimisation and the safety and welfare of staff, clients and anyone else nearby. Ongoing reinforcement of this initial training is regularly provided at the client service team meetings, as a normal part of team activities.

40. c. What is the number of staff as at 30 September 2008 on stress related leave?

**ANSWER:**

40. c. 2.

40. d. What percentage of the Department's workforce is this?

**ANSWER:**

40. d. 0.08%

40. e. Have there been any recorded incidence of assault on Housing NSW staff in the year to 30 September 2008?

**ANSWER:**

40. e. Information regarding incidents reported is contained in Housing NSW's Annual Report.

f. How many complaints were made by Department officers to the Police for assaults or threats of assaults in the year to 30 September 2008?

**ANSWER:**

40. f. 20 complaints

40g. How many tenants were evicted for violence or threatened violence towards Departmental staff?

**ANSWER:**

40. g. None for this financial year to 30 September 2008.

40h. How many staff took out AVO orders against tenants in the preceding 12 months?

**ANSWER:**

40. h. None.

***41. Aboriginal Housing***

41. a. Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement

i. What is the status of the Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Agreement (IHIA) which was due for re-negotiation with the Commonwealth prior to its expiry in June 2008?

**Answer**

The IHIA has been extended until December 2008 whilst negotiations for new agreements continue through the CoAG process.

41. b. 2007-2008 Budget Funding Promises

i. How many additional Aboriginal community-owned dwellings were completed in FY 2007/08? (14 promised)

**Answer**

This information is available in AHO's 2007/08 Annual Report

41. b. ii. What was the total amount expended for repairs and maintenance works to community owned dwellings in FY 2007-08? (16.8M promised)

**Answer**

This information is available in AHO's 2007/08 Annual Report

41. b. iii. How many premises were repaired and/or had maintenance work conducted in FY 2007-08?

**Answer**

This information is available in AHO's 2007/08 Annual Report

41. b. iv. What was the total amount expended for repairs and maintenance works for AHO owned dwellings? (10.3M promised)

**Answer**

For the 2007/08 year, please see AHO's 2007/08 Annual Report

41. b. v. How many premises were repaired and or had maintenance work conducted in FY 2007-08?

**Answer**

This information is available in AHO's 2007/08 Annual Report

41. b. vi. What was the total amount expended for resourcing community organisations (RCO), sector support (SS) and training in the FY 2007-08? (7.9M promised)

**Answer**

This information is available in AHO's 2007/08 Annual Report

41. b. vii. How many of the 30 indigenous housing works in progress receiving capital expenditure from AHO were completed in FY 2007-08?

**Answer**

This information is available in AHO's 2007/08 Annual Report

41. b. viii. How many of the 31 new indigenous housing works receiving capital expenditure from the AHO were completed in FY 2007-08?

**Answer**

This information is available in AHO's 2007/08 Annual Report

**c. Aboriginal Housing Office**

41. c. i. What is the Government doing about reducing repair and maintenance costs for the Aboriginal Housing Office considering that the budget costs for AHO owned and Community owned dwellings increased from \$27.1 million or 36% of the AHO's budget in 07/08 to \$33.1 million or 41% of the AHO's budget in 2008/09?

**Answer**

The NSW Government is currently in negotiation with the Federal Government on the National Affordable Housing Agreement to secure a fair share of funding for the Aboriginal people of NSW.

41. c. ii. What type of repairs and maintenance are covered by these funds considering that the AHO Asset Management Program has increased by \$5.7 million to \$23.6 million in the 08/09 Budget for improvements ranging from minor repairs to major upgrade works for current Aboriginal housing?

**Answer**

The properties owned by the AHO are managed by Housing NSW, on a fee-for-service basis. Under this service agreement, Housing NSW also provides tenant services, including Housing Register management and applicant needs assessments. Property maintenance services are conducted via a planned approach that will include annual servicing of all properties.

41. c. iii. How many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing units are available as at 30 September 2008 in –

- i. Regional NSW
- ii. Central Coast
- iii. Metropolitan Sydney
- iv. Newcastle / Hunter
- v. Wollongong / Illawarra

**Answer**

This information is available in AHO's Annual Report

41. c. iv. What is the waiting list for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing units as at 30 September 2008 for –

- vi. Regional NSW
- vii. Central Coast
- viii. Metropolitan Sydney
- ix. Newcastle / Hunter
- x. Wollongong / Illawarra

**Answer**

The time an applicant spends on the housing register varies and changes constantly. Many factors influence how long each applicant waits including the type of accommodation sought (e.g. number of bedrooms, style of dwelling); the type of household (e.g. aged couple, single person); and special needs (e.g. ground floor requirements, modifications).

***Interagency plan to tackle child sexual assault in Aboriginal communities***

42. a. What responsibilities has your department been allocated in combating child sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities under the Interagency Plan?

**ANSWER:**

Housing NSW is not the lead agency for any actions under the *Interagency Plan to Tackle Child Sexual Assault in Aboriginal Communities* (Interagency Plan). The Interagency Plan identifies Housing NSW as a partner to the following actions:

- *Action 35 (Lead agency: Department of Community Services) – The Department of Community Services review its interagency information sharing processes to ensure that other agencies can assist with tracing children and families at risk who move location.*
  - Housing NSW has participated in the Evaluation of the Interagency Guidelines for Child Protection Intervention, led by the Department of Community Services.
- *Action 40 (Lead agency: Department of Community Services) – Develop options for increasing the provision of safe living environments including safe houses and refuges for victims, witnesses and families at risk of child sexual assault where required.*



- Housing NSW is a partner to the Orana Far West Safe Houses Project, led by the Department of Community Services. The project aims to improve the operation of five existing Safe Houses in the region, and will assist the transition of families from the Safe Houses into longer term affordable housing, including social housing where eligible.
- *Action 42 (Lead agency: Department of Aboriginal Affairs) – Develop options for removing impediments to reporting child sexual assault and family violence, including the provision of alternate financial assistance and support for families and primary carers where a family member has been removed or charged for committing child sexual assault, and additional assistance for situations where primary carers and victims wish to re-locate.*
  - Housing NSW is yet to be involved in this action.
- *Action 50 (Lead agency: Department of Education and Training) – Make available the Aboriginal Cultural Education Program (TAFE Certificate IV) to all NSW Government agencies to enhance cultural awareness training and build staff cultural competency.*
  - The Aboriginal Cultural Education Program was piloted in one Housing NSW area in 2007/08, and is being rolled across the State in 2008/09.
- *Action 63 (Lead agency: Department of Premier and Cabinet) – Develop and implement incentives packages to attract experienced staff to service agencies in rural and remote areas. Implement measures to address staff burn out and stress.*
  - Housing NSW has a representative on the Steering Committee for the Remote Areas Attraction and Retention Pilot, led by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

42. b. What has been the financial cost to your department for the 2007/08 financial year of this interagency plan?

**ANSWER:**

42. b. Housing NSW's activities under the Interagency Plan are funded from within existing resources.

42. c. What funding has been allocated by your department for the financial year 2008/09 to enact your responsibilities under the Interagency plan?

**ANSWER:**

Housing NSW's activities under the Interagency Plan are funded from within existing resources.

***Other Programmes***

43.a. How much was spent in Rentstart for the year ended June, 2008?

**ANSWER**

43. a. Approximately \$26 million.

43.b. Why has the budget for Renstart been reduced to \$25.8 million when there is a rental crisis across the state?

**ANSWER**

43.b. Rentstart budgets are based on demand and entitlement. They are not capped.

43.c. How much was spent in the Special Assistance Subsidy programme for the year ended June, 2008?

**ANSWER**

43. c. Information concerning the Special Assistance Subsidy is contained in Housing NSW's Annual Report.

***Indigenous Staff***

44. a. How many Indigenous staff are employed by your department?

b. What percentage does this represent of your overall department staffing?

c. Have you met your benchmarks for the employment of Indigenous staff levels for your department?

**ANSWER:**

44 a, b, and c - Information regarding Housing NSW's Indigenous staff is contained in the Annual Report.

***Staff With Disabilities***

45. a. How many people with disabilities are employed by your department?

b. What percentage does this represent of your overall department staffing?

c. Have you met your benchmarks for the employment of people with disabilities for your department? If there are no benchmarks – why not?

**ANSWER:**

45 a, b and c - Information regarding Housing NSW's staff with disabilities is contained in the Annual Report.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Borger', followed by a period.

**David Borger MP**  
Minister for Housing  
Minister for Western Sydney