

**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-2010  
QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AT HEARING FOR  
HOUSING and WESTERN SYDNEY PORTFOLIO**

**HOUSING NSW RESPONSES**

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Greg Pearce MLC to Mr Mike Allen, Chief Executive, Housing NSW (Page 2 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Did the department assist him in moving him?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** I will ask the Chief Executive Officer of Housing New South Wales to provide you with an answer to that question.

**Mr ALLEN:** There is a support provider in place who provided assistance to Mr Ferguson. I am not entirely clear whether that assistance was provided to him to move in, but certainly assistance has been provided.

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Somebody was allocated to assist him?

**Mr ALLEN:** That is correct. There are support-provider arrangements in place for him.

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Would that have included, for example, paying for his removal costs— his furniture and whatever?

**Mr ALLEN:** I am sorry, I do not have that information. I am happy to take it as a question on notice.

**ANSWER:**

No

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Greg Pearce MLC to Mr Mike Allen, Chief Executive, Housing NSW (Page 2 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Was Housing New South Wales aware of Mr Ferguson's previous convictions?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** Firstly, I think it is fair to say that there is an investigation that is being undertaken into the allocation of a Housing New South Wales dwelling to Mr Ferguson. I will invite the chief executive officer to add detail on any of these questions, but there is an investigation that is underway.

**Mr ALLEN:** The answer to the question is yes.

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** You were aware of his convictions?

**Mr ALLEN:** Yes.

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** How did you become aware of those convictions?

**Mr ALLEN:** I am sorry, I am not aware of the precise circumstances of how we became aware, but I am clear that we are aware that that information was made available to us.

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Could you take it on notice as well, thank you?

**Mr ALLEN:** Yes.

**ANSWER:**

Housing NSW is not generally informed of any prior convictions or restrictions placed on any person that comes to Housing NSW for assistance. Housing NSW is conducting a review of the processes and procedures with reference to the housing and placement of this man.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Greg Pearce MLC to Mr Mike Allen, Chief Executive, Housing NSW (Page 3 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**Mr ALLEN:** Not direct public housing, no. Some financial assistance was provided for temporary accommodation.

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** How much was that and for how long?

**Mr ALLEN:** I am not aware of the precise cost but I can take that as a question on notice. It was for approximately two weeks.

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Two weeks.

**Mr ALLEN:** Approximately, to the best of my recollection.

**ANSWER:**

His support provider paid for his temporary accommodation costs when he moved to NSW. His support provider requested Housing NSW extend his existing temporary accommodation arrangements while his priority housing application was being assessed.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Greg Pearce MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 3 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** What was the process for finding housing for Mr Ferguson? I assume he was not on a waiting list.

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** I think earlier I indicated there is an investigation underway, so we will take that question on notice and provide you with an answer within the required period of time.

**ANSWER:**

This man was assessed for priority housing, which includes determination of his eligibility for public housing. However Housing NSW is conducting a review of the processes and procedures with reference to the housing and placement of this man.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Greg Pearce MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 3 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Was he on a waiting list?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** In relation to that, as I have said, there is an investigation going on at the moment. We want to make sure we get the most accurate information, so we will take that question on notice and give you an answer within the required time frame.

**ANSWER:**

This man was assessed for priority housing, which includes determination of his eligibility for public housing and admission to the housing register. However Housing NSW is conducting a review of the processes and procedures with reference to the housing and placement of this man.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Greg Pearce MLC to Mr Mike Allen, Chief Executive, Housing NSW (Page 4 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Did Mr Ferguson complete a locational needs assessment form?

**Mr ALLEN:** I am not sure whether he did or did not. I will have to take that as a question on notice.

**ANSWER:**

Housing NSW is conducting a review of the processes and procedures with reference to the housing and placement of this man.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Greg Pearce MLC to Mr Mike Allen, Chief Executive, Housing NSW (Page 4 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Do you know whether he requested a preference for any particular location?

**Mr ALLEN:** No. Again, I am sorry, I am not aware as to whether he expressed a preference for a particular location.

**ANSWER:**

Housing NSW is conducting a review of the processes and procedures with reference to the housing and placement of this man.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Greg Pearce MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 4 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Who processed his application?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** That is also subject to the investigation that is being undertaken at the moment. As soon as that investigation is available the information will be provided to the Committee within the required timeframe.

**ANSWER:**

Housing NSW.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Greg Pearce MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 5 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** What is the term of Mr Ferguson's lease?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** It is a standard lease for someone entering social housing. My understanding is that generally the lease period is approximately five years. It is reviewed after about two years. Is that correct?

**Mr ALLEN:** We can take it as a question on notice. I understand that it is a five-year term for his lease.

**ANSWER:**

A five year lease.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Greg Pearce MLC to Mr Mike Allen, Chief Executive, Housing NSW (Page 6 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Have you allocated any funds to relocate neighbours who may not want to stay in the Ryde town house complex?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** As I understand it, Housing NSW visited the residents of the complex to check on their welfare and wellbeing during this very difficult time and offered them what is standard practice in situations where there is major disruption, and that is a temporary alternative [TA] if they saw fit. I understand one person took up that offer.

**Mr ALLEN:** I will have to take that question on notice. I do not know; it would be whatever the cost of the temporary alternative accommodation would be, and generally that is into a hotel or motel style accommodation at the usual room rates.

**ANSWER:**

Housing NSW did what any good landlord should do under these circumstances and checked on the wellbeing of its elderly tenants. The Department did not canvass for residents to move at all. Advice to residents was that every effort had been made to ensure their safety and wellbeing. One resident was temporarily relocated for a short period of time at a reasonable cost.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon John Ajaka MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 7 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. JOHN AJAKA:** How many people are currently on the waiting list for housing assistance with your department?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** Approximately 39,000 people are on the waiting list in New South Wales at the moment. I will get the exact figures for that. It is down 14 per cent from 31 December 2006 when there were 45,830 applicants on the register. It is down 60 per cent from June 2000 when there were 98,337 applicants on the register.

**ANSWER:**

As at 30 June 2009, there were 39,484 on the housing register.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Sylvia Hale MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 10 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** How many upgrades of housing have been commenced as a result of the stimulus package?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** About 60,000 public housing properties will have upgrades to them. In terms of the figure as at 30 June we can take that on notice and get that to you.

**ANSWER:**

As at June 30 2009, 16,900 homes had been upgraded or had maintenance work carried out on them.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Sylvia Hale MLC to Mr Mike Allen, Chief Executive, Housing NSW (Page 11 –Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** Do you have any benchmarks by which you see whether the allocation is proceeding according to plan or whether there are unnecessary delays? How do you monitor the actual allocation of housing to people on the priority listing?

**Mr ALLEN:** The answer to that question is quite a detailed one. I am happy to take that as a question on notice and provide the information.

**ANSWER:**

The benchmark for housing priority applicants is six months from the time of approval. If this benchmark is not achievable because the requested area is in high demand or the client has special needs, an Assistance Plan is put in place. This may include pursuing alternative housing options such as a Special Assistance Subsidy (SAS) to enable the applicant to rent in a private rental property or Housing NSW leasing a property from the private rental market for the applicant to live in.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Sylvia Hale MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 11 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** Thank you. This may be another question that you wish to take on notice: Has Housing New South Wales or Landcom ever had any contractual arrangements with a company called the Cornish Group?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** I am happy to take that on notice.

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** If so, could you provide the details of the contracts in terms of the date, the duration of the contract and the location of sites?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** The information we are permitted to, notwithstanding commercial-in-confidence arrangements, we are happy to give.

**ANSWER:**

Housing NSW has not had any contractual arrangements with a company called the Cornish Group.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Sylvia Hale MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 12 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** I would like to move on to social housing for women affected by domestic violence. How many women had their public housing

residential tenancy agreements terminated in cases where they had been identified as affected by domestic violence, for example, if they need to move on and had to terminate a lease in a particular location?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** I am not sure of the exact number.

**Mr ALLEN:** I would have to take that on notice.

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** We will take that on notice.

**ANSWER:**

Data on women who have had their public housing residential tenancy agreements terminated as a result of domestic violence is not collected. Housing NSW data on tenants exiting public housing includes the category *Family/Household Break-up* that would include domestic violence issues.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Sylvia Hale MLC to Mr Mike Allen, Chief Executive, Housing NSW (Page 13 –Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** How many women, and what proportion, present with a history of domestic violence but are not listed as requiring priority housing or priority transfer?

**Mr ALLEN:** I do not know that we have that information available. I am happy to take it as a question on notice, but I am not sure that that is data that we record.

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** If you would take it on notice, because unless women are put on those priority lists they potentially face a very long wait.

**Mr ALLEN:** I am not clear that the data is available, but I can be clear that women escaping domestic violence are a high priority for all forms of housing assistance. Indeed, the Government recently introduced some additional programs to assist women and children escaping from domestic violence.

**ANSWER:**

Domestic violence is one of the risk factors that are considered when assessing a priority housing application. However, it may not be recorded as the reason for granting a priority housing application. Data on domestic violence risk is not collected for clients seeking wait turn housing. As such, the proportion of women who present with domestic violence risk but are not granted priority housing can not be calculated.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon John Ajaka MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 13 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. JOHN AJAKA:** Mr Allen, who actually made the decision for Mr Ferguson to stay at the Hyde Park Plaza for, I think you said, a number of weeks?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** We are happy to take that question on notice and get you an answer within the required time frame.

**ANSWER:**

A non-government organisation.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon John Ajaka MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 13 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. JOHN AJAKA:** How did the department satisfy itself that Mr Ferguson was in fact a New South Wales resident, given that media reports state that he only moved to New South Wales in April 2009?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** I am happy to take that question on notice and get you an answer within the required time frame.

**ANSWER:**

This man was physically a resident in NSW when his application was assessed.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon John Ajaka MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 14 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. JOHN AJAKA:** Given that police stated in April 2009 that they were made aware that Ferguson had relocated to New South Wales and said that they would "continue to monitor his movements", did you or your department consult with the police on whether Ryde was even an appropriate location?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** In relation to the location decision, as I have indicated, an investigation is being undertaken. I am happy to take that question on notice and get you an answer within the required time frame.

**ANSWER:**

Housing NSW is conducting a review of the processes and procedures with reference to the housing and placement of this man.

**QUESTION:**



**The Hon Greg Pearce MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 16 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** How many houses or dwelling units have been completed under the Federal Government's stimulus project at this stage?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** We will get you the number of exactly how many have been completed and provide that on notice. The first house in Australia under the stimulus was completed in New South Wales. As at 30 June more than 60 per cent of the entire construction effort in housing under stimulus was being undertaken in New South Wales. I am sure you will understand that we have about a third of the nation's population, but almost two-thirds of the construction is being undertaken here in New South Wales, which I think is a pretty reasonable effort.

**The Hon. GREG PEARCE:** Do you have the actual number of houses?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** No. I said the total number of completed to date I certainly will take on notice and get back to you, but almost all of the houses under stage one funding are now underway, with many nearing completion.

**ANSWER:**

As at September 30, 22 homes have been completed under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan in NSW, which is 60% of all home completions nationally.

In addition, 75% of all homes under the Nation Building economic Stimulus Plan will be completed by December 2010.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Sylvia Hale MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 17 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** What figures are do you have on the level of mortgage defaults in western Sydney over the past 12 months?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** I am happy to take that on notice. It is not something that Housing New South collects as a matter of course.

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** Surely it is obviously a critical element in the need for public housing? Will your department collect such figures, if it can?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** We collect a range of figures about housing stress. If it is beneficial to the decisions we make, we certainly will do that. I am not aware that we actually have that information at the moment.

**ANSWER:**

The Reserve Bank of Australia reports in its Financial Stability Review of September 2009 that up to July 2009 mortgage arrears as a percentage of

outstanding loans (i.e. those more than 90 days past due) ranged from approximately 0.5% to 0.9% across Western Sydney Local Government Areas.

**QUESTION:**

**The Hon Sylvia Hale MLC to the Hon David Borger MP Minister for Housing (Page 17– Estimates Committee Transcript)**

**Ms SYLVIA HALE:** What proportion of renters in western Sydney spend more than 30 per cent of their income on rent?

**Mr DAVID BORGER:** We can certainly get that information to you. We will take it on notice.

**ANSWER:**

At the 2006 Census 39.8% of households of all incomes in Greater Western Sydney were spending more than 30% of their gross income on rent.

For  |

**David Borger MP**  
Minister for Housing  
Minister for Western Sydney  
Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport

**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-2010  
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE TAKEN AT HEARING  
WESTERN SYDNEY RESPONSES**

**QUESTION:**

**Mr Greg Pearce MLC to the Hon David Borger MP, Minister for Western Sydney  
(Page 15 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

Why was there no funding in the budget for construction of the M5 widening, the M5 East duplication, the M4 East extension, the F3-M2 link, or the F3-M7 link?

**ANSWER:**

This matter should be directed to my colleague the Minister for Roads for an appropriate response.

**QUESTION:**

**Ms Sylvia Hale MLC to the Hon David Borger MP, Minister for Western Sydney  
(Page 17 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

How many blocks of land currently are available for immediate sale and commencement of building in the Western Sydney Growth Centres?

**ANSWER:**

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


**QUESTION:**

**Ms Sylvia Hale MLC to the Hon David Borger MP, Minister for Western Sydney  
(Page 17 – Estimates Committee Transcript)**

What affordable housing requirement will the Government place on new land releases in the growth centres?

**ANSWER:**

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Borger', is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

For

**David Borger MP**

Minister for Housing

Minister for Western Sydney

Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport