

HOUSING INDUSTRY — 5 STAR PLUS INITIATIVES

1401. Hon Lynn MacLaren to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Housing and Works

- (1) Can the Minister —
 - (a) provide the names of all Housing Industry lobbyists or their representatives that he has met with since taking office;
 - (b) provide details of who the lobbyists were representing when the Minister met with them;
 - (c) advise the date of each meeting and where the meeting took place; and
 - (d) advise the purpose of the meeting?

The decision by the Minister to abandon the second-stage roll-out of the 5 Star Plus initiatives which would have required new homes to include a range of eco-friendly measures, including rainwater tanks or grey water systems connected to toilets or garden irrigation was described in the Financial Review of 11 December 2008 p47 —

- (2) The Minister is quoted as saying the tougher environmental standards would deliver 'questionable cost benefits'. Is the Minister referring to housing builders or home owners in this statement?
- (3) Could the Department table the cost benefit analysis completed to justify this decision?
- (4) Could the Department table the technical assessments that led to concerns about reduced water flows to sewers which is referred to in the article as a reason for abandoning the roll out of the 5 Star Plus initiative?
- (5) What is the link between having 'sandy soils' to the Minister's belief that there was no 'sound basis' to install rain water tanks, as described in the article?
- (6) Is the Department aware of the significant reduction in Perth's winter rainfall that has been observed over the last 30 years?
- (7) Did the Minister meet with any groups representing housing consumers or sustainability advocates or practitioners before deciding to abandon the second stage roll out of the 5 Star Plus initiatives?
- (8) If yes to (7), please provide the names of all groups or individuals the Minister met with and the dates of each meeting?
- (9) Did representatives from Western Australia's second biggest home builder, Alcock Brown-Neaves, managed by Dale Alcock, ever meet with the Minister, his representatives, or Departmental staff in relation to the cost of improving sustainability standards on new homes?
- (10) The same article reported Dale Alcock applauded the move because the additional measures would have added an estimated \$1200 to \$1800 to the cost of a new home —
 - (a) what would the savings have been per year to the new home owner, in terms of reduced water and energy bills, had the 5 Star Plus initiatives been implemented;
 - (b) how many jobs would have been created directly and indirectly had the roll-out of the 5 Star Plus initiatives been successfully implemented in the second half of this year, as was planned under the former government; and
 - (c) what would the economic impact have been on the Western Australian economy, had the roll-out been implemented?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

- (1) (a)-(d) The Minister has given several previous responses to Parliamentary Questions in regards to all lobbyists, and these should be referred to.
- (2) The Minister is referring to both housing builders and home owners in this statement.
- (3) Yes. [See paper 1775.]
- (4) The technical requirements of Stage 2 of 5 Star Plus were analysed by a technical advisory group. The minutes of their meetings and their final recommendations are available upon request to the Building Commission.
- (5) Information from the Department of Water shows that in Perth the use of a rainwater tank to harness the rainfall for household consumption is not as effective as it is in other cities in Australia, as the 'sandy soils' of Perth allow the penetration and filtration of rainfall into our aquifers. These aquifers supply

approximately 60% of the scheme water in Perth. Other Australian cities are on less permeable soils and the rainfall flows to the ocean and is not captured in aquifers.

- (6) Yes.
- (7)-(8) The Minister and his Ministerial Staff meet with a broad cross section of the Housing industry regularly, and take into consideration all views when making decisions.
- (9) No.
- (10)
 - (a) The Regulatory Impact Assessment found that the upfront costs of complying with Stage 2 of 5 Star Plus would not be offset by savings from reduced consumption of scheme water because the cost per kilolitre of water from an alternative water supply (such as a rainwater tank) exceeds current maximum prices for scheme water and expected future prices.
 - (b) This was not analysed as part of the regulatory impact assessment.
 - (c) The Regulatory Impact Assessment found that the costs of complying with Stage 2 of 5 Star Plus were not offset by the benefits to the broader community and was therefore not in the public interest. Alternatives such as bulk recycling of water for non-potable purposes were found to be more cost effective.