

Wynnum Herald

60 YEARS OF NEWS

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Enjoying the Games with song

BAYSIDERS George Kennedy, Sarah Tasker, Andrew Francis and Abigail Sewell will soon be singing their hearts out at the Commonwealth Games.

The members of the renowned Birralee Voices children's choir have been fine-tuning their act in readiness for a March 20 appointment in the Games Cultural Festival at Melbourne's Federation Square.

The choir will team with interstate contemporaries to form a 170-strong national youth choir performing the epic work Songs of Sanctuary by Welsh composer Karl Jenkins.

Meanwhile, our local Commonwealth Games athletes have finished their preparations and are ready to go for gold when competition begins tomorrow.



■ Singing their hearts out .. Sarah Tasker, Abigail Sewell, George Kennedy and Andrew Francis.

Picture: Liam Kidston

It's not our fault

By BARBARA LYNCH

THE State and Federal governments have admitted there is a Bayside housing crisis but neither would take responsibility for the problem.

Federal Member for Bonner Ross Vasta said he accepted there was a problem but said it was Queensland's job to find a solution.

"While we provide funding to meet the needs of those in crisis we are delivering multi million dollar programs designed to reduce the number of people getting into crisis," he said.

"If the Queensland government is unwilling to help then that is a disgrace."

Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing Robert Swarten was quick to blame the Howard Government.

"...they have an appalling record when it comes to social housing," Mr Swarten said.

He said the state housing budget had increased every year he had been minister.

"We announced in the last budget the allocation of \$235m over four

years to reduce homelessness across the state," Mr Swarten said.

Mangrove Housing manager Ann McAnally said the crisis accommodation problem did not just affect young people.

They have more than 250 families waiting for affordable housing in the Bayside.

"We see aged people living in horrible circumstances too," Ms McAnally said.

"We have people in absolute dire straits and it's frustrating for us because we'd just love to tell them

that we have an option for them. But we don't," she said.

Ms McAnally said Mangrove Housing received up to 400 phone calls and 50 walk-ins a month from people looking for accommodation.

"We can't rely on the government all the time because we as a community need to help as well," Ms McAnally said.

State Member for Lytton Paul Lucas met with BABI Youth and Family Support representatives on Friday to discuss the situation.

"Mr Lucas is more than happy to

assist BABI in their request for more funds," a spokeswoman said.

BABI president Di Fletcher said Mr Lucas agreed something needed to be done.

"We are getting a wider hearing but the situation isn't going to change overnight," Ms Fletcher said.

Mr Lucas asked BABI to put together a proposal for him to pass on to the Department of Housing and Department of Communities.

"This community needs to be aware of what's happening here," Ms Fletcher said.

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