

**CM: Benchmark housing project in Batu Kawan**  
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**By Aaron Ngui**

GEORGE TOWN (Aug 23, 2011): The state government would like low and medium-cost housing projects in Batu Kawan by Penang Development Corporation (PDC) to become a benchmark for affordable housing with quality living.

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, who is also PDC chairman, said current plans for the project would be used as a starting point to do so.

He added that an open tender would also be called to see if the project could get more added-value or better features.

"What we do not want is for our children to live in cage-like conditions and end up as dysfunctional children," he said at a media briefing of the project today which was also attended by PDC general manager Datuk Rosli Jaafar.

The project is located at south Seberang Perai (SPS), near the exit of the Second Penang Bridge and consists of at least 7,300 apartment units that cost between RM72,500 and RM220,000.

PDC estimates that the entire project can be completed within five to seven years depending on market conditions.

Earlier, Lim also said the PDC had suggested increasing the allocation of land for the development from 60.7ha to 80.93ha.

He said an increase in space would allow future residents to enjoy better living facilities.

"This will also make it affordable for people in Penang," he said adding that priority for purchasing the units will be given to Penang voters.

Lim said this was because the state government and the PDC was "heavily subsidising" the entire project.

"Even if we assume (that) the cost of the land is free, we can't recoup construction costs at those prices," he said.

Meanwhile, Rosli said that the development will not include high-rise buildings, with the tallest building being 20 stories high.

"Most of the buildings will be between 10 and 11 stories," he said.

Rosli said the development was based on the concept of affordable quality lifestyle and with that in mind, about 12.14ha was set aside for open spaces and public facilities like football fields, a pool, outdoor gyms and others.

He said the open space would not be split into small pockets but would be located at the centre of the development to encourage more interaction amongst residents. Rosli said the development would also incorporate eco-friendly features such as rainwater harvesting as well as good cross ventilation.

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