



Speech by

**Hon. JUDY SPENCE**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT**

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Hansard 11 December 2001

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Emergency Relief and Supported Accommodation Funding**

**Hon. J. C. SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: The Beattie government is providing more than \$1.4 million in one-off emergency relief funding for Queenslanders leading into the Christmas period. One hundred and three organisations providing support from 151 service locations across the state have received funding to help alleviate the financial strain that many families and individuals face at this time of year. This money helps struggling Queenslanders to pay bills, pay rent or buy food.

This government acknowledges that many major charities and community groups are under pressure as poverty and homelessness increases. New Centrelink breaching practices have also increased the demand for emergency funding. It is time the Commonwealth government increased funding across the human services sector and reviewed its Centrelink breaching practices.

I am also pleased to inform the House that consistent lobbying by the Beattie government has paid dividends for supported accommodation services in Queensland. This week I will be signing off on additional funding to assist 128 services to meet their obligations under the Crisis Assistance Supported Housing (CASH) Award. The funds will help cover employee entitlements for public holidays and overtime, which is a significant issue for many of these 24-hour services. This year services will share \$589,500, of which \$196,500 will be recurrent from next year. The Beattie government has fully met its obligations on the implementation of the award, and this new funding will help reduce the Commonwealth shortfall, which is currently \$944,500 every year. This government will continue to put pressure on the Howard government to fully meet its obligations.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) workers provide front-line assistance and support to homeless Queenslanders, including women and children escaping domestic violence, young people in youth refuges and single men and families in transitional housing. The program supports some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people in our society, and full and proper funding to meet workers' wages and entitlements is crucial to the ongoing viability of SAAP services. We will continue to put pressure on the Commonwealth to meet its obligations.

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