



Speech by

Hon. Robert Swarten

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Hansard Wednesday, 22 August 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Peak Housing Organisations

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology) (10.09 am): The government has decided to change the funding arrangements of peak housing organisations to ensure we are getting the best possible policy advice. Currently the government funds six different groups representing a mixture of interests. Members will be aware that over the past year we have been creating the one social housing system, a simpler and more streamlined way of allocating social housing. We now have to ensure the peak housing organisations we fund and are dealing with have the capacity and focus to engage with this system and the government. We want the organisations that the Queensland government is funding to be able to tell us how the housing system is responding to the interests of low-income Queenslanders. As a result, we are going to see some consolidation among the different housing organisations. Two organisations will receive additional funding to boost their policy capacity, but four organisations will not have their grants renewed when they expire on 30 September 2007.

The Tenants Union of Queensland will receive additional funding to represent social housing tenants. This is in addition to the funding it already receives to represent tenants in the private rental market in policy and law reform issues. I am pleased to announce that the Queensland Public Tenants Association has come to an arrangement with the Tenants Union of Queensland about working together in the future. Queensland Shelter will be funded to provide policy advice and systemic advocacy about the housing system as it relates to people on low incomes or with high needs. The Queensland Disability Housing Coalition, the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition, the Queensland Public Tenants Association and the Queensland Community Housing Coalition have each contributed in their own way in the past and I want to acknowledge that, especially the work of the volunteer board members. I encourage all to work and share their expertise with Queensland Shelter and the Tenants Union of Queensland in future and we will be calling on the QPTA to assist us in a new tenant participation program that we are going to announce shortly. I want to make sure that I am getting the best consolidated advice regarding low-income Queenslanders in a difficult housing environment, and that is what these new arrangements will achieve.