

Question on Notice
No. 159
Asked on 20 February 2007

Ms MALE asked the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology (MR SCHWARTEN)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the One Social Housing Policy—

- (1) What progress has been made on the implementation of the One Social Housing Policy?
- (2) What progress has been made on other initiatives to manage housing assistance requests?

ANSWER:

(1) On 1 January 2006, to help address the growing demand for social housing and the changing housing needs of Queenslanders, the Department of Housing commenced implementation of One Social Housing System. Under this system, people in the greatest need will be assisted for the duration of their need. The system will also make it easier for clients to access the range of other housing assistance products provided or funded by the Queensland Government.

Connecting clients to support services as needed is one of the key components of the One Social Housing System. Work to develop policy and frameworks for connection to support systems is continuing.

The department is undertaking a range of work to implement the One Social Housing System, with progress on the following key elements:

- The combined waitlist for public rental housing and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rental housing was implemented from 1 January 2006
- On 1 January 2006 the Specific Needs Policy replaced the Priority Allocations Policy, allowing out-of-turn allocations to people with the most urgent and critical need for access to social housing
- On 1 January 2006 the department extended the eligibility of Temporary Protection Visa holders to Bridging Visa holders
- Four and 10 year tenancy review periods commenced for new tenants allocated Public Housing and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rental Housing from 1 January 2006
- On 1 February 2007 the department introduced a common application form for housing assistance products accessed through the Public Rental Housing Program, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rental Housing Program and some registered community-managed providers

The *Housing Regulation 2003* was amended on 14 December 2006 with commencement from 1 February 2007 so that registered community housing and Local Government-managed providers participate more fully in the One Social Housing System.

As part of the regulatory amendments, the department has provided new policies and practice guides for Allocations, Duration of Need, Common Eligibility Criteria and Conflict of Interest.

(2) The Department assists households to access and maintain private housing and is also working to facilitate expanded provision of affordable housing in the private market. Home-Link is an example of an innovative idea developed by the Queensland Government that can bring together public and private investment in an efficient way to expand the delivery of affordable housing. This has not yet received the Federal Government's commitment.

In 2006-07 the Queensland Government :

- assisted over 44,200 residential renters with Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services
- assisted over 42,700 older people or people with a disability with home maintenance, repairs and personal security needs through Home Assist Secure services
- completed 420 home modifications and provided information, assessment, project management and/or financial assistance to households through Home and Community Care Home Modification Services
- continued to assist over 3,300 households with home ownership
- continued to assist over 40,500 clients with bond loans to enable access to the private rental market

The department is also investigating a range of assistance products to offer alternatives to eligible clients at the time they seek social housing, and for exiting social housing and transitioning to the private market.