

Question on Notice

No. 370

Asked on Thursday, 8 March 2007

MR SPRINGBORG MP asked the Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services Queensland, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Seniors and Youth (**MR PITT**) -

With reference to the free Homeless Persons Information Queensland service established by the Department of Communities-

- (1) Is a survey undertaken when homeless persons contact the service as to the reasons for their itinerancy?
- (2) If a survey is conducted, what are the results obtained to date?

ANSWER:

This government has made a substantial commitment to dealing with the issues of homelessness. Last financial year, more than \$235 million was allocated as part of the responding to homelessness package. Of this funding, \$4 million was committed to establish and operate a call centre for homeless people.

Homeless Persons Information Queensland now offers help to homeless people as well as vulnerable people at high risk of becoming homeless 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

To date over 6,000 callers have received help and advice. The number of calls has steadily increased, as awareness of the service increases, with the call centre now averaging over 300 enquiries per week. State-wide coverage is anticipated by July this year.

In relation to information about a caller's circumstances, Homeless Persons Information Queensland currently records basic information only. At this stage, the majority of callers require accommodation (73 per cent). The next most common reasons for calling are accommodation related matters, such as tenancy issues; financial difficulties; and a range of personal issues that may require support services, such as counselling.

As the service continues to develop, I would expect that the data it collects will begin to play a significant part in better understanding homelessness in Queensland.

Having this central point of contact has many benefits for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. In particular, they do not have to ring different organisations time and time again to find a bed or a meal. This not only helps callers but also frees up service providers who can spend more time with clients.