

**Question on Notice
No. 586
Asked on 18 April 2007**

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

QUESTION:

Will he detail the procedures and security measures in place to protect residents in public housing across the State of Queensland in (a) complaints processing procedures and follow-up and (b) emergency security requirements of tenants?

ANSWER:

(a) Public housing policy and procedures and client services standards exist to resolve client issues. Any client, either affected by a decision they believe is wrong or who has a criticism about a department policy or procedure, can seek an unbiased review of that decision or complaint.

The Department of Housing is committed to resolving appeals and complaints in a fair, timely, accessible and courteous manner. The appeals and complaints process aims to promote the department's commitment to quality client service, mutual respect and support between staff and clients and organisational excellence.

Clients may complain in a number of ways:

- by telephone
- in writing e.g. letter through the mail, by facsimile, via an agent or lodged in person
- in person – staff record the issue being complained about using a File Note Standard or request the client to write down their complaint.

The department investigates complaints relating to tenancy matters in accordance with the requirements of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1994*. Clients will be referred to the appropriate agencies if the department is unable to assist or does not have the required authority to manage the issue.

Conciliation is a process used to achieve the resolution of non-urgent breaches of the Residential Tenancies Act before they proceed to the Small Claims Tribunal. The conciliation process is covered in Part 3 of the Act. Both tenants and lessors can access the conciliation process. Tenants would access this process if they believed the department had breached the Residential Tenancy Agreement.

(b) The department standard is to provide security screening to every external window and door opening with the exception of installation to fire or solid core doors where the only egress from other units is blocked. Funding priority is given to:

- tenants who can provide a record of previous break and enters to the premises
- tenants who are victims of domestic violence
- tenants who are victims of crime
- tenants enlisted in a witness protection program or similar special requirements
- tenants who have an occupational therapist's recommendations for installation of security screens.

The majority of departmental properties have been fitted with security screens, with the remainder expected to be completed in the 2007–08 financial year.

Security or communal lighting is generally provided to multi-unit sites to combat 'dark spots' in public areas such as car parks or bin areas.

A Welcome to your Home kit is provided to all new tenants at their signing up appointment and provides contact details for maintenance emergencies including being locked out of their property. This contact information is also provided to tenants on fridge magnets.

The Welcome to your Home kit also outlines processes for: maintenance emergencies, smoke alarms, fire and emergency evacuation and hints on preventing burglary.