Question on Notice
No. 345
Asked on 12 March 2008

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

QUESTION:

Will he advise (A) the programs funded by his departments to assist people sustain or obtain residential tenancies in this tight private rental market and (B) if his department will be funding any new initiatives in the future to help address housing stress for private renters?

ANSWER:

(A) The Department of Housing provides Bond Loans to assist people to establish private rental tenancies. The Bond Loan is an interest free loan for people who cannot afford to pay the full rental bond. It assists people to either move into or remain in private rental accommodation

As you know the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service (Queensland) is a Queensland Government program administered by the Department of Housing, which provides information, advocacy and advice relating to the rights and responsibilities of tenants or residents. The program also aims to provide information and referral to help people in housing need access safe, secure and affordable housing.

It provides tenants and residents, particularly those experiencing difficulties with their tenancies or residential services, access to advocacy and advice regarding their rights and responsibilities under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1994* and/or the *Residential Services (Accommodation) Act 2002*.

The Department of Housing is also working to develop a range of assistance to help clients establish a tenancy in the private rental market. Investigation by the department into gaps in the existing service delivery system has informed the range of assistance being considered. Assistance may include tenancy information or education, help to communicate with real estate agencies, and financial assistance to set up a tenancy

(B) The department is intending to trial a new product at the Caboolture and Central Queensland area offices from late 2008. The product is designed to assist people find and secure a tenancy in the private rental market.

The new product will assist many applicants for social housing who are good tenants, but struggle to compete with others applying for rental properties in the private market.

The Queensland Government is also working with the Australian Government on a range of initiatives that will address housing stress for private renters and new home owners.

The new Australian Government has announced a National Rental Affordability Scheme, to promote new investment in affordable rental housing in the private market. The Scheme will provide tax incentives for investors to build up to 50,000 rental properties between now and 2013, with a further 50,000 in the five years after 2013 if there is continuing demand. The new dwellings will be targeted to low to moderate income households in housing stress, with rents 20% below market rents.

The Queensland Government is working with the Australian Government to finalise the details of this initiative, under the auspice of the recently formed Council of Australian Governments' Housing Working Group. This includes consideration of the Queensland Government's contribution to the initiative.