

Question on Notice

No. 626

Asked on Tuesday, 29 April 2008

Ms Vicki Darling MP asked the Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth (**MS NELSON-CARR**)—

Will the Minister please explain how the new regional networking strategy will improve services for Queenslanders facing homelessness and will she provide an update on the Government's Responding to Homelessness Strategy?

ANSWER:

- On 18 April 2007, the former Minister for Communities, the Honourable Warren Pitt MP, announced his support for a Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Regional Networking Strategy. Minister Pitt asked Ms Jill Lang, the representative of the Queensland Council of Social Services at the 2007 Roundtable, to represent sector participants in developing a networking model.
- The Queensland Council of Social Services, together with Queensland Shelter, subsequently submitted a joint proposal to develop and implement a regional networking strategy.
- I was pleased to announce, at the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Ministerial Roundtable on 22 April this year, that funding has been provided for a Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Regional Networking Strategy. The funding has been provided to the Queensland Council of Social Services to establish the strategy and manage it for the next three years.
- The Regional Networking Strategy will improve services for Queenslanders facing homelessness by maximising government investment in the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program sector. This will be achieved through improved coordination between services for homeless individuals and families.
- The Regional Networking Strategy will also promote capacity building by the sector. It will support organisational development and the program development capacity for over 200 Supported Accommodation Assistance Program funded services in Queensland.
- Additionally, the Strategy will develop communication mechanisms amongst existing homelessness networks across the state. Through such mechanisms, the strategy will facilitate identification of best practice for delivery of services to clients and facilitate the sharing of organisational development innovations.
- The Responding to Homelessness Initiative established a range of new services and augmented a number of existing services to address homelessness in five target locations in Queensland. Funding of \$235.5 million was allocated over four years for the Initiative. The Initiative involved 32 individual programs across a range of government departments.
- A mid-term review of the implementation of the Initiative was recently completed for the Queensland Government by the University of Queensland Social Research Centre.
- The overall conclusion of the review was that the Responding to Homelessness Initiative has delivered successful outcomes. The number, range and quality of services available to homeless people in the target areas of Brisbane, Gold Coast, Cairns, Townsville and Mount Isa have significantly expanded. An important feature of the initiative is that it has been able to focus on meeting the needs of chronically homeless people. Access to services by homeless persons has improved in the target areas as a result of the Initiative. As well, coordination of homelessness services has improved resulting in a more holistic response to complex issues.