

HOMELESSNESS — ONLINE SERVICES PORTAL

1208. Hon COLIN TINCKNELL to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the government's new online homelessness services portal, which the government says will make it easier for people experiencing homelessness to access accommodation and support.

How does the government justify spending \$2.3 million on an online service to help homeless people, when most people sleeping rough would not have ready access to the internet?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

The online homelessness services portal is not just a directory of services for people who are experiencing homelessness; it is a crucial piece of enabling infrastructure that will improve the coordination of homelessness services. The portal has the dual function of holding accommodation and support service information and availability, as well as being a central platform to hold information and data of people who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness. The OneStory database enables service providers to manage important information and data provided by clients and share with trusted services providers. This allows rough sleepers and other vulnerable people who may have experienced trauma in their lives to avoid having to retell their story multiple times with different service providers. The portal will also provide service providers with live system-wide visibility of accommodation and service capacity, enabling fast connection to services for people seeking accommodation and support. The portal is being developed to benefit all people experiencing homelessness, including rough sleepers. In addition, many rough sleepers have access to the internet through public libraries and will be able to use the public-facing features of the portal.