

TENANTS ADVICE SERVICE

909. Hon KATE DOUST to the Minister for Commerce:

I refer to question without notice 892, asked yesterday in relation to the Tenants Advice Service.

- (1) What funding had been allocated for TAS for the 2012–13 financial year?
- (2) If this funding was a reduction on funding granted for the 2011–12 financial year, was this a factor in TAS “withdrawing from its contractual arrangements”, as the minister advised the house yesterday?
- (3) Were any other reasons given by TAS for withdrawing from its contractual arrangements?
- (4) Will the minister table any written advice to him from the Department of Commerce on the TAS service withdrawal; and, if not, why not?
- (5) What alternative arrangements will the government put in place to provide the service no longer available from TAS, and when will these arrangements be in place?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

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

- (1) TAS placed a bid to provide tenancy advice and education services as the central resource unit of the tenancy network at a price of \$852 041 for the 2012–13 financial year. This amount of funding was allocated to TAS for the 2012–13 financial year. To date, funding in the amount of \$370 855 has been paid to TAS for the 2012–13 financial year.
- (2) The funding allocated to TAS for the 2011–12 financial year was \$736 049. The 2012–13 allocation represented a 15.7 per cent increase over the previous year.
- (3) In a letter to the Director General of the Department of Commerce dated 6 November 2012, TAS voluntarily requested to surrender its contractual arrangements because it was unable to deliver the scope of work tendered for under the contract.
- (4) I received verbal advice from the director general about the emerging problems on Monday, 5 November 2012, and my staff received further emailed information about the situation from the department on 6 and 7 November 2012. The request to withdraw from the contractual arrangements was initiated by TAS.
- (5) The Department of Commerce is currently examining options for putting alternative arrangements in place to provide the services of the central resource unit, and discussing those options with the Department of Finance. In the meantime, tenants seeking assistance can contact the Consumer Protection helpline, which is available for all tenancy-related inquiries on 1300 30 40 54, or the 15 other local tenancy advice centres around Western Australia.