

HOUSING AUTHORITY TENANTS — INCOME ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

3. Hon KATE DOUST to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the proposed changes to the income eligibility assessment for Housing Authority tenants. Why does the minister think it is acceptable to include commonwealth allowances and benefits in a tenant's income assessment for the purpose of rent, when these same benefits are not seen as income by the Australian Taxation Office?

Hon COL HOLT replied:

I thank the member for the question. In 2009 the social housing task force suggested that 25 per cent of household income should be spent on rent, in a social housing context. We are moving towards that. Every person who comes into social housing now has that same expectation, and we are moving across the board to deliver the same sort of outcome to the people who live in social housing now. People who live outside social housing get the same allowances from the federal government, or the state government, and have to pay much more than 25 per cent of their income in rent. This is about taking a consistent approach across the public housing and social housing sector to meet the needs of the Housing Authority to deliver more housing into the sector, so that those people outside of the social housing sector get the help that we can provide to them.

Hon Sue Ellery: Will this reduce your waiting list? I look forward to that.

Hon COL HOLT: The government has already proposed a \$560 million social housing investment package.

Hon Sue Ellery: What are your waitlists?

Hon COL HOLT: That is what it is about. It is about doing more so that we can help more people in need. The \$560 million social housing investment package will halve the waiting list for families and seniors, so that they do not have the rent stress that others outside of the public housing waiting system have.