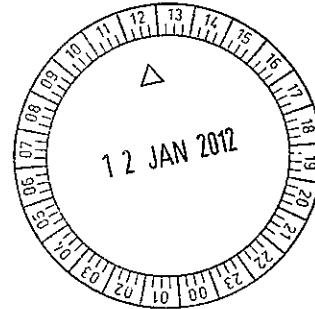




Minister for Transport; Housing; Emergency Services

Our Ref: 30-23644



Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chair
Standing Council on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr Ellis

Thank you for your letter seeking comment on Petition No 137 – Emergency Accommodation for the Homeless.

Increasing the supply of affordable rental accommodation and transitioning people from crisis to long term stable accommodation are key planks of the State Government's *Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-2020: Opening Doors to Affordable Housing*. The Department of Housing is leading the Strategy, which aims to provide at least 20,000 additional social, affordable rental and homeownership opportunities for people on low to moderate incomes over the next 10 years.

As a first step, the Government is demonstrating its commitment to expand social housing by contributing an additional \$150.7 million to build or buy:

- 100 homes for people with a mental illness (\$46.5 million)
- 169 homes for 340 people with disabilities (\$95.7 million)
- 15 new homes for people recovering from treatment from drug and alcohol use (\$8.5 million).

The acquisition or construction of these dwellings will be managed through the Department of Housing. In addition, the Government will spend \$45.4 million over four years on essential community support services to keep people living successfully in their home.

The Department also supports transitional clients through:

- Crisis accommodation: The Department provides residential premises for people in housing crisis such as women's refuges, night shelters and emergency accommodation for youth. In 2011-12, the Department is planning to spend \$6.7 million to commence a further 24 dwellings;
- Delivery of major capital projects supporting National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPA) clients including:
 - Foyer Oxford, Leederville: The Oxford Street development is a partnership between Anglicare WA, Foundation Housing and the Central Institute of Technology. The facility will cater for up to 100 young people at a time, 35 of whom will be at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Foyer Oxford will cost \$23 million to build and fit out, with funding from the Department, the Commonwealth Government and Lotterywest;

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- St Bart's Lime Street, East Perth: The new St Bart's facility will provide 148 beds including 54 long-term accommodation units, 12 crisis units, 42 transitional lodging-house units and a 40-bed aged-care facility. Funding for the project is being provided by the State Government (\$22.3 million plus \$2.8 million from Lotterywest), the Commonwealth (\$7.3 million) and St Bart's (\$1 million);
- Lentara, East Perth: The \$20 million redevelopment of the Salvation Army's Lentara crisis facility for homeless men is funded through the Commonwealth Government's Nation Building and Jobs Plan (\$18.18 million) and the Salvation Army. The 102 bed, four-storey development will consist of three levels of accommodation with reception, kitchen and administration areas on the ground floor; and
- The allocation of social housing dwellings to NPA clients including rough sleepers, those leaving mental health, drug and alcohol or corrections facilities and those leaving crisis accommodation. Between 1 August 2009 and 31 October 2011, the Department housed 507 clients supported through the NPA.

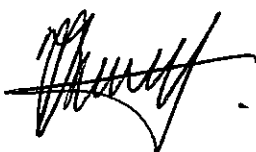
The Department expects to complete 1,487 social housing dwellings in 2011-12. By the end of 2012, combined State and Commonwealth Government stimulus programs (with total funding of \$810 million), will see the refurbishment of 1,376 existing social housing dwellings and the construction of 2,815 new social housing dwellings across the metropolitan area and regional Western Australia.

Increasing affordable rental and homeownership options for people will also relieve pressure on the public waitlist and crisis accommodation. The Department is piloting the Rental Pathways Scheme, designed to assist 120 over-income public housing tenants access the private rental market.

The State Government, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, is also increasing the supply of affordable private rental dwellings through the National Rental Affordability Scheme. In Western Australia, 5,000 new affordable rentals are to be built by June 2016, with eligible tenants paying rent at 20% or more below the market rate.

In September 2011, the State Government launched its new shared equity loan program, SharedStart, targeted at low to moderate income earners. The Department will source up to 2,000 new properties from the market through the expression of interest process launched in June 2011.

Yours sincerely



**HON TROY BUSWELL MLA
MINISTER FOR HOUSING**

10 JAN 2012

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