



SEATH HOLSWICH MP – STATE MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

TREVOR RUTHENBERG MP – STATE MEMBER FOR KALLANGUR

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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REFORMS NEEDED TO FIX SOCIAL HOUSING CRISIS

The Queensland Government has unveiled major reforms aimed at addressing Queensland's social housing crisis.

Member for Pine Rivers, Seath Holswich MP, said the number of applications for social housing had increased as housing and rental costs rose.

"There are 30,000 applications currently on the waiting list across the state, with 80 per cent of those from single people or single parents with children," Mr Holswich said.

"Maintenance and upgrade costs of social housing stock are also increasing, while rent revenue is decreasing.

"That is pushing the social housing system towards a \$140 million deficit by 2015-2016.

Under changes announced this week by Housing Minister Bruce Flegg, the Government aims to reverse this trend via a range of options including:

- addressing under-occupancy of current housing stock
- changing and simplifying rent policy
- reducing administrative and maintenance costs
- introducing fixed-term tenancies
- leveraging our asset base
- creating a stronger role for non-government housing providers."

Under-occupancy will be the first issue addressed.

"The Government estimates there are more than 8,700 public housing properties that have two or more additional bedrooms than needed by the occupants," Mr Holswich said.

"We are looking at ways to better match people with properties suited to their needs."

Member for Kallangur, Trevor Ruthenberg MP said that the government had been forced to take a tough stance on those who abuse the system.

"The Government is implementing an amnesty for social housing tenants who have undeclared household members living with them," he said.

Tenants have until Friday 27 July to notify the Department of Housing and Public Works of any undeclared household member living in their social housing property.

If they don't, two things may happen:

1. undeclared household members will not be considered when the department reviews under-occupancy, or any transfer to a smaller property, and
2. tenants housing undeclared household members may be required to pay back rent at 25 per cent of their household income."

More than 50,000 social housing tenants will receive a letter in the next two weeks explaining the current review and crackdown.

Mr Ruthenberg said it was important for tenants to understand that they would not be left without a home as a result of this process.

ENDS

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