

HOMESWEST, EVICTION/PURCHASE POLICY AND WAITING PERIOD

493. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Housing and Works:

- (1) What is the Homeswest policy with regard to either eviction or purchase for tenants who are no longer eligible for public housing - for example, because extra income has become available?

Hon Tom Stephens: Did you say this is a question on notice or without notice?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: It is a question without notice. The minister should know these things.

- (2) Is Homeswest currently reviewing the two-year waiting period?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

I am not sure that I fully understand the question and I predicate my answer in that way.

- (1) I have been advised that a policy decision has been made. I cannot remember the date when that decision was made. I think I am right in saying it was last year, but I do not recall that detail with the clarity that perhaps I should.

Hon Barry House: Will you respond in writing?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Absolutely, and I will give the detail. The effect of that policy is that people who have had an income shift are being asked for details of that income shift; and a number of the Department of Housing and Works' tenants whose income has reached a level that makes them ineligible for Department of Housing and Works' Homeswest accommodation now have to discuss their situation with the department. That policy change arises by virtue of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, which requires that state instrumentalities such as Homeswest provide public housing for people on low incomes; therefore, a person whose income has shifted to a certain level is no longer eligible to occupy housing that is provided under that agreement. In a number of cases, people whose circumstances have been drawn to the attention of the Department of Housing and Works have voluntarily relinquished their housing in view of the fact that that policy has been drawn to their attention. However, it appears to me from preliminary evidence that some circumstances are emerging that will need to be looked at more carefully before the policy can be applied unilaterally without some level of intelligent discussion.

- (2) I will provide the member with an answer in writing to ensure that I fully understand the question.