

HOMESWEST, UNPAID RENT

2371. Mrs C.L. Edwardes to the Minister representing the Minister for Housing and Works

I refer the Minister to question on notice No. 2027, asked on 16 September 2003, and ask -

For rental properties for the financial years 2000/2001, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 -

- (a) how many tenants owed between \$5,000 and \$10,000 in unpaid rent;
- (b) what action is taken to recover unpaid rent; and
- (c) are tenants, who have outstanding unpaid rent, required to have their rent payments paid directly from Centrelink or pension payments?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN replied:

- (a) None.
- (b) A tenant who falls into rental arrears is contacted by mail, telephone or personal visit and asked to pay and encouraged to seek financial counselling. If this is not successful, the Department takes action as prescribed by the *Residential Tenancies Act* and issues a *Notice of Breach*. If this is unsuccessful a *Notice of Termination* is issued requiring the tenant to pay the arrears or vacate. Where this measure fails the Department goes to court to recover the premises and outstanding debts.
- (c) The Department of Housing and Works requires all Centrelink benefit recipients to enter into a Centrelink Direct Debit arrangement upon commencement of their tenancy.