

## **EMERGENCY HOUSING**

**4 March 2008**

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD:** Yesterday my office received a call from a lady named Sam. Sam is a single mum who suffers from epilepsy, and she has a five year old daughter. Sam has gone through hell in recent weeks. A little while ago she and her child were kicked out of the home they were staying in and she has been living in her car for the past week or so with her little girl. Her daughter has not been attending school as a result of this. This situation came about not because she has been sitting on her hands but, in fact, she has called all of the usual phone numbers to try to arrange emergency accommodation. She tried the Emergency Accommodation Service and a number of other agencies, including the Housing Trust, without luck. There was apparently a delay of several months for accommodation, even despite her situation being regarded as a category 1 case.

She was given the option of a bond for a rental property and applied to countless rental properties (using her own words). However, given the scarcity of properties on the market, her circumstances and the fact that she has no references, she was unable to secure any rental accommodation. The bond offered, therefore, was of little use. The various emergency housing numbers referred her in a circle to other housing organisations, ending at Crisis Care which, for some reason, only opens at four in the afternoon.

After making all the usual calls for crisis accommodation, Family First ended up paying to put up Sam and her daughter in motel accommodation last night. I am not saying that to blow our own trumpet, because I understand that other members have done similar things on some occasions. However, the bottom line is that Sam and her daughter still do not have accommodation for tonight.

My questions to the minister are:

1. What use is so-called emergency accommodation if it cannot help people like Sam, who have nowhere to stay at short notice?
2. Why does Crisis Care open so late in the day at 4pm, which only serves to lessen the chance of securing emergency accommodation for that night?
3. Most importantly, if I give the minister Sam's mobile number, will she ensure that Sam and her daughter have accommodation for tonight?

**The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Road Safety, Minister Assisting the Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (15:03):** I thank the honourable member for his important question in relation to a request for housing on behalf of a constituent whom he has assisted. He has made a number of allegations and I undertake to take those questions on board and refer them to the minister in the other place. I will approach the member later and obtain the mobile telephone number that he has mentioned and pass it on to the minister.