**THE HON BRENDAN O’CONNOR MP**

**Minister for Housing**

**Minister for Homelessness**

**Minister for Small Business**

**MEDIA RELEASE WEDNESDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2012**

**EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR QUEENSLAND TENANT ADVICE SERVICE**

The Gillard Government will provide $3.3 million in emergency funding for the Queensland Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service (TAAS), a service scrapped by the Newman Government.

The TAAS offers essential advice and advocacy services to tenants across Queensland, providing assistance to 80,000 households annually.

Advocacy and advice services like TAAS help keep Queenslanders in their homes and are critical to preventing homelessness.

These services largely used to be paid for by interest generated on tenants’ bonds, not from State Government revenue.

On July 24, all 23 services funded through the TAAS were sent notice of withdrawal of funding by the Newman Government, effective 31 October.

These are unwarranted cuts by a Government that is slashing jobs and services at every opportunity with no thought for the long-term repercussions and the harm they are doing.

This was a devastating blow to the services and their staff, and to the 80,000 households that would no longer have access to this important help.

This heartless decision by Campbell Newman is all the more disturbing given he is sacking thousands of public servants, putting them and their families under housing stress.

This short-sighted grab for tenants’ cash could end up costing Queenslanders more, with increased demand for public housing and crisis accommodation.

Queensland Labor MPs have left me in no doubt about the impact these cuts will have across the State.

The Gillard Government is stepping in to correct this potentially disastrous blunder by the Newman Government with $3.3 million in interim funding to keep these vital doors open.

Without this injection of funding now, these services would close by the end of this month.

The specifics of the distribution of Commonwealth funds will be determined with the sector and services.

The funding is committed until 30 June, 2013. This will give the Federal Government time to ensure that Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Services funding is a condition of any future Commonwealth/State agreements.

I call on Campbell Newman and the Queensland Government to fix this mistake and reinstate these services.