



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

QToN No. 31

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING
Mr Johnathan Davis MLA (Chair), Mr James Milligan MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
Friday 4 March 2022

Asked by the Chair Davis on 4 March 2022: Catherine Loft took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing Friday, 4 March, 19]

In relation to:

A breakdown of how many of those 800 properties are within each one of those three stages of that process? So how many are in design and how many are currently being built?

MS BERRY: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

As at 1 February 2022, the work in progress (WIP) and number of dwellings at each stage of the *Growing and Renewing Public Housing* program pipeline was as follows:

Construction WIP

- o 268 dwellings - Under construction

Design WIP

- o 104 dwellings - Procurement (tender released/tender evaluation/contract negotiation)
- o 192 dwellings - DA Assessment (DA submitted awaiting Notice of Decision)
- o 197 dwellings - Design (design work commenced)

Complete

- o 39 dwellings completed this financial year

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature:

Date:

22/03/22

By the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Yvette Berry MLA

Minister, our governing and parliamentary agreement between our two parties commits the government to build or buy 400 new public housing dwellings by the year 2025. Can you give me an update on how we are going reaching that target?

Ms Berry: I might just ask if we have got some sort of up-to-date numbers today, is it Catherine? It might be Ms Loft might be able to provide some detail there.

Ms Loft: Good morning. My name is Catherine Loft and I am the Executive Branch Manager for Infrastructure and Contracts in Housing ACT, the community services directorate, and I acknowledge that I have read and understood the privilege statement.

The growth and renewal process to date over the first two and a half years of the program has seen 143 dwellings be demolished for redevelopment. We have sold 242 end of year public housing properties generating \$195.3 million to help fund this program. We have purchased 101 land sites for \$58.4 million from the SLA and the Asbestos Task Force for redevelopment. The completed constructions are the 157 dwellings for 96.2 million, all class C or gold adaptable. We have also purchased from the private market 76 dwellings for \$52.1 million.

This year alone you will see an investment from the government of \$171 million. This is going to assist 156 public housing households to relocate to allow us to sell or redevelop properties. Importantly, we have a very strong pipeline of work in progress with over 800 dwellings in design, planning and construction phases of the program this year. 91 properties will be demolished to allow for redevelopment on these sites. A further 22 land sites will be purchased from the SLA. We will deliver 116 new constructions and 69 dwellings to be purchased through the private market. Some of those will not be settled until future years.

THE CHAIR: Very comprehensive, Ms Loft, thank you very much. I have a few supplementaries based on that good information, if you would not mind.

The 800 dwellings that you said were at some stage of the process between design, construction and what was the third thing?

Ms Loft: Design, construction, planning stages, DA, work in progress.

THE CHAIR: Wonderful. Could I get—and I am happy for you to take it on notice—a breakdown of how many of those 800 properties are within each one of those three stages of that process? So how many are in design and how many are currently being built?

Ms Loft: I will have to take that on notice, Chair.

THE CHAIR: That makes sense.

Ms Berry: That would be point-in-time data. Of course, that would change each day as the program is rolled out. So on this particular day or this week, that will be the information, but next week that will change.

THE CHAIR: I am sure that will be clear when the question is given on notice, that that will be the figure as of that date and so we will be able to anticipate that. Thank you.

Given those pretty big figures and the generous amounts of funding, Ms Loft, it sounds like—I do not want to put words in your mouth—but it sounds like we are on target to meet our or exceed our 400 homes by 2025; would that be correct?

Ms Loft: Absolutely, Chair, that is our aim. We have put lots of mitigation strategies in place considering some of the delays in delivery we have had, particularly around construction. We, you know, obviously, had a number of risks in the last couple of years. I can take you through a few of those, particularly wet weather, material and labour shortages. So contractors have been reporting lead times, for example, on timber roof trusses in excess of up to five months, so normally this is mitigated by placing orders well in advance, but we have not seen these delays ever in the construction industry, and also the COVID and safety restrictions and quarantine requirements due to both positive cases and both contacts have impacted the number of trades which can attend on site, so despite all of those external uncontrollable factors, it was a deliberate effort for us to increase that work in progress, which was bringing forward that pipeline for this year and next year to ensure that the overall program targets can be met, so that 800 dwellings that we have in either design, planning or construction and delivery will ensure will do that. Part of that work was to bring them forward was we needed to extend a typical build from the nine-month period to 15 to account for those risks that I just talked about.

Also, you know, to ensure that we are meeting them, housing has deliberately acquired a lot of know-how now for this program. Over the past two or three years we have appointed a large number of qualified and experienced staff, the continuing evolution of processes. We have implemented a really sophisticated reporting tool and that allows our construction team to report on this very large scale work-in-progress pipeline which is made up of hundreds of individual projects to get those 800 dwellings. We have also developed better risk management practices and that will ensure the successful delivery of this program.