LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

COMMITTEE SUPPORT

QoN No. 83

Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by Mr Mark Parton MLA:

Reference: Hearing on 10 November 2022, CSD Annual Report 2021-22, p. 109.

In relation to: Social Housing number of properties

1. There is currently 130 less public housing properties when you state there will be 400 plus 600 additional properties. Does this mean you will be 1000 in surplus so in this case 1,130 or is the additional properties just to make up this difference?
2. Why were 55 transferred to CHP's?
3. How many more will be transferred before October 2024?
4. How many properties since 2020-2021 to date have been disposed of?
5. How many properties are currently vacant and on average for how long?
6. What is currently the main reason for vacant properties?
7. If properties are being redeveloped of which the process can take months to years, is it possible to have them short term tenanted to house more people? If not, why not?

Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program (the Program) sets out to grow the Territory's public housing portfolio by at least 400 dwellings and renew approximately 1,000 existing properties.

   The initial reduction in stock count is a result of the Program's non-linear delivery model, as existing assets must be sold and demolished progressively to make way for new properties. Subsequently, once the initial renewal target of 1,000 dwellings has been met, all properties delivered after that point will be the portfolio growth.

As such, it is not estimated that the portfolio count rises materially above the Program baseline stock number until it's latter years, likely 2024-25 onwards – with an estimated closing portfolio balance of over 12,100 at the Program's conclusion.

As part of the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10th ACT Legislative Assembly (PAGA), the Government aims to see the delivery of an additional 600 affordable housing dwellings, by 2025-26 – this commitment is independent of the Program.

2. During 2021-22, the majority of new headleases entered into under the Housing Asset Assistance Program (HAAP) were for properties under the Client Support Fund (CSF).

The CSF was established as part of the ACT Government's response to COVID-19 to provide further accommodation and support for Canberrans experiencing or at risk of homelessness during, or due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coordinated through OneLink, participating specialist homelessness organisations are provided with funding to support clients for a period in a head-leased Housing ACT property.

During this period, there were also property swaps, either as part of Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program or as a standard property swap of an existing head-leased property. When a replacement property becomes available, a new headlease is entered into for that property.

This number also accounts for transfers of head-leases to organisations and new head-leases for clients who required intensive tenancy and property management support by an agency to help them sustain a tenancy.

3. The number of properties head-leased under the Housing Asset Assistance Program (HAAP) is not pre-determined but depends on the demand for properties for clients who have additional support needs, such as those experiencing or at risk of homelessness or those with a disability. New initiatives such as Common Ground Dickson, which has 40 units, will also be registered under the HAAP as assets owned by Housing ACT but where property and tenancy management is undertaken by another agency.

4. Between 1 July 2021 and 31 October 2022, Housing ACT disposed of 233 properties through sale, demolition, or transfer.

5. On 30 November 2022, 470 properties were vacant, including 204 for sale or redevelopment, and had been vacant for an average of 260 days, or an average of 149 days excluding those for sale or redevelopment.

6. Aside from the 204 properties in preparation for sale or redevelopment, the leading reason for properties being vacant on 30 November 2022 was the upgrading of multiple amenities, with 89 properties undergoing such improvements.

7. Housing ACT helps those most in need to secure and sustain long-term, appropriate housing and, and does makes use of properties held for disposal for short-term transitional/crisis accommodation.

While short-term tenancies are considered for dwellings that are available for use, it's important to consider that dwellings identified for redevelopment often require substantial maintenance works and financial investment to return to a lettable standard and cannot be considered for short-term rental.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing Signature: Date: 18/12/22 By the Minister for the Housing and Suburban Development, Yvette Berry MLA