



Inquiry into Specialist Disability Accommodation service delivery through Housing ACT

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs

Reference: HCSD

Hearing: 11 May 2026

In relation to: Housing ACT - Specialist Disability Accommodation

Question received: 11 May 2026

Answer Due: 25 May 2026

1. What steps has Housing ACT taken to determine the number of SDA eligible people living in public housing in the ACT, and when were those steps taken?
2. How does Housing ACT's SDA deregistration align with this key action under Objective 4E of the ACT Government's 2018 Housing Strategy: *"Work with the National Disability Insurance Agency, the development sector and people with disabilities and their families and carers to identify potential opportunities to facilitate the development of Specialist Disability Accommodation under the National Disability Insurance Scheme"*?
3. Please provide the advice that informed the decision to allow Housing ACT's SDA registration to lapse?
4. What were the specific reasons for which Housing ACT was expected to fail the recertification audit needed to maintain its SDA registration?
5. When does Housing ACT's expect to know how many SDA-eligible people are living in its properties?

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

1. Engagement with tenants and occupants in dwellings previously enrolled as Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) commenced in January 2026 and is ongoing. It included sending 209 letters and has to date resulted in 65 conversations between Housing ACT and tenants and occupants (and their advocates, guardians, family and carers as necessary).

This targeted, consent-based, voluntary engagement is intended to better understand the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and SDA status of this cohort, as well as identifying maintenance and modifications needs in the dwellings.

Outside of these targeted activities, Housing ACT does not routinely capture the NDIS status or SDA eligibility across the broader tenant cohort.

2. Housing ACT has worked closely with the NDIA to better understand the requirements and settings for SDA under the NDIS. It is also undertaking targeted engagement with people living in the previously enrolled dwellings to clarify their NDIS status and SDA eligibility, to build an evidence-based understanding of need and demand to inform future decision making.

Importantly, Housing ACT's deregistration as an SDA provider does not preclude the ACT Government from facilitating or supporting SDA outcomes in the future as envisaged by the objective in the Housing Strategy. Rather, it enables the government to make a more informed decision about its future role in SDA provision and how this function should operate, particularly in the context of the reform agenda arising from the Disability Royal Commission, the NDIS Review, the ACT Disability Strategy 2024-33 and the *Disability Inclusion Act 2024*.

3. Housing ACT's registration as an SDA provider was due to expire in December 2025. Housing ACT advised me that it was required to complete a recertification audit – which ensures providers meet the applicable standards and other requirements prescribed by the NDIS Practice Standards – if it was to renew its registration, with the recertification audit report due no later than 23 November 2025.

Housing ACT noted that while it may be able to achieve some of the audit outcomes based on its existing policies, practices and procedures, there were some fundamental settings (refer to answer to question 4 for more detail) that did not exist for Housing ACT to operationalise an SDA function. As such, it was unlikely to pass the audit.

Housing ACT further noted that its decision to become an SDA provider was opportunistic insofar as it sought to maximise the transitional provisions being offered by the NDIA and did not adequately consider the demand, needs or preferences of its current or future tenants. Nor had it considered the necessary administrative structures required to operationalise a viable provider function.

This information informed my decision to agree to the deregistration, noting that by deregistering and gathering the necessary information about need, demand and preferences from people residing in its enrolled dwellings, the ACT Government could subsequently make a more informed decision about its future role in SDA provision and how this function should operate.

4. The recertification audit requires an SDA provider to demonstrate it can achieve 22 core outcomes and 5 SDA-specific outcomes to maintain its registration. These outcomes are outlined in the NDIS Practice Standards. They cover a range of foundational requirements, spanning tenancy management, compliance, financial administration and tenant engagement. Some of the barriers to complying with audit included:
 - a. Service agreements with participants. This was particularly problematic for dwellings that were headleased, as the contractual relationship was with the headlessee, not the participant.
 - b. Agreements, contracts and policies being available in the language, mode of communication and terms which participants are most likely to understand.
 - c. Incompatibility of means-tested eligibility for public housing and SDA eligibility.
5. Housing ACT does not have a fixed timeframe for completing its engagement with people living in the previously enrolled dwellings. This is because allowing sufficient and flexible time for people to respond and engage in the process is a critical reasonable adjustment that supports effective participation. This adjustment recognises that individuals may have different communication styles, processing needs, and personal circumstances, and ensures they are not rushed or disadvantaged in engaging with Housing ACT. It supports participation in a way that meets individual needs and helps ensure the process is accessible, appropriate and responsive. Furthermore, this engagement is voluntary, and tenants and occupants are not obliged to disclose their NDIS or SDA information.

Outside of these targeted activities, Housing ACT does not intend to routinely capture the NDIS status or SDA eligibility across the broader tenant cohort.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration

Signature:



Date:

02/06/25

By the Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs, Ms Yvette Berry MLA