

ACT Government Response to the  
Standing Committee on Health, Community  
and Social Services Report

**The Provision of Social Housing in the ACT**

Report 8

February 2013

Presented by  
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## INTRODUCTION

The ACT Government provided two formal Submissions to the Inquiry which provided the policy context and issues which impact on the provision of public housing as well as an overview of the current practices of Housing ACT. These Submissions can be found at <http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/committees/index1.asp?committee=115>

The issues raised in these submissions set the context for the findings of the Inquiry and the Government accepts the key themes of the Report which relate to the need for Housing ACT to continue to focus on improving its human service provision and accordingly its communication with its clients.

The ACT Government welcomes the Standing Committee's report and agrees to sixteen of the Standing Committee's twenty eight recommendations. Five recommendations are agreed to in principle and three recommendations have been noted. Four recommendations are disagreed.

A table summarising the ACT Government response to the Standing Committee's recommendations is at [Appendix 1](#).

Technological improvements and efficiencies are necessary to increasing capacity of front line staff so that they have increased capacity for client management and contacts. Housing ACT is considering policy changes which will increase front line service capacity, including the streamlining of rebates (also recommended in this report) and a Housing Payment Deduction Scheme to introduce compulsory rental deductions for those tenants in arrears or at risk of arrears. This ten per cent of tenants is responsible for disproportionate debt management from Housing Managers and the scheme, if introduced, will increase Housing Manager capacity by anticipated 40 per cent.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INQUIRY

### **Recommendation 1**

***2.15 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT undertake a review of the Gateway Quality Improvement Project. This review should include reference to all areas of concern identified by the ACT Ombudsman's Report and be widely disseminated.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

Housing ACT agrees to undertake a review of the Gateway Quality Improvement Project by June 2013. The Terms of Reference for this review will consider, among other issues, the success of actions implemented through the Project response to the ACT Ombudsman's recommendations in its report, *Assessment of an Application for Priority Housing, June 2011*.

The review will also consider the impact and success of the following key project deliverables:

- (1) The Gateway Quality Improvement Framework;
- (2) Review of business systems and policy to ensure they enable and support quality service provision;
- (3) Continuous quality assurance mechanisms to monitor and improve quality; and
- (4) A training schedule which supports and maintains a continuous quality culture.

Housing ACT acknowledges a key focus of the Gateway Quality Improvement Project was to consolidate the implementation and move toward a human services approach to service delivery and to respond to specific areas where improvement was required to the services provided to Housing ACT applicants.

To this end, Housing ACT considers there have been significant improvements in the services provided to clients, such as the ability for clients to be assessed at the point at which they lodge their application.

It is important to note that Housing ACT receives in excess of 250 new applications per month and that in the period between 2006-07 and 2010-11, the waiting list for public housing increased by 30 per cent.

However, Housing ACT also acknowledges that the Standing Committee has found the need for further and ongoing improvement in its communication with clients regarding the progress of their applications for housing assistance. Improved communication with applicants waiting for public housing allocation is a key aspect of demand management. This work will remain an ongoing focus for Housing ACT.

## **Recommendation 2**

**3.11 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT undertake an audit of its website and ensure that:**

- a. All documents are dated.**
- b. All documents are presented by when they are most commonly required according to the social housing cycle, instead of the current alphabet approach. For example, information about accepting a property should follow information about the application process.**
- c. All links to legislation on the website and within documents provided are current.**
- d. Information on the waiting time for different models of community housing is provided.**

Parts a, b and c of this recommendation are **Agreed**.

Part d of this recommendation is **Noted**.

It is only possible to publish current average waiting times for community housing models, as access to housing is determined by the availability of properties.

Housing ACT agrees to consult with community housing providers regarding the publication of this information as it will be necessary to manage client expectations

around waiting times to ensure false expectations are not created through publication of this information.

### **Recommendation 3**

***3.12 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT only require essential eligibility documentation at initial application interviews. Any other documentation, such as evidence of community based support services, should only be required when a suitable property is identified.***

This recommendation is **Disagreed**.

The current priority allocation system requires the ability for Housing ACT, and the Multi-Disciplinary Panel (MDP), to determine the applicants who are most in need of access to the priority Housing register. The supporting documentation and evidence of community support services is a critical component of identifying the needs of an applicant and manages the risks that vulnerable tenants do not have adequate and appropriate supports in place to assist them to maintain their tenancy and that their support needs will be met within the community.

The evidence provided as part of the application process is also critical in determining the type of property required by the applicant and thus of ensuring that appropriate property allocations are made to tenants with complex needs and circumstances.

Applicants currently have 28 days, following the date of application, to provide documentation and evidence in support of their application. In practice, applicants continue to provide supporting documentation over the course of their time on the waiting list as further evidence that their circumstances have changes and to seek re-assessment of their application.

The recommendation to seek submission of supporting documentation at the stage of allocation is not feasible. Housing ACT has a current standard to turn around vacant properties within a 30 day period. This includes the time taken to complete repairs and maintenance. The allocation process requires prior knowledge of the property needs and requirements of the applicant prior to making an offer of a property, to

minimise the risk of making an inappropriate offer which is refused by the applicant, and which increases the allocation time of the property. It is highly likely that this recommendation would result in longer turnaround times for properties and less effective management of the waiting list.

#### **Recommendation 4**

***3.13 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT amend the current application form to include more information on the different types of social housing available, and the different management and rent arrangements for each particular type of housing.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

Consistent feedback from service users is that the application form for housing needs should be as simple as possible. Accordingly, information on the different types of social housing is provided in the application kit.

However, Housing ACT agrees to examine the information provided to applicants and revise this in accordance with this recommendation. This will be undertaken in consultation with community housing providers and the Joint Champions Group.

#### **Recommendation 5**

***3.22 The Committee recommends that all applications determined as eligible for priority housing be provided to the Multi-Disciplinary Panel, and that a comparative needs test be applied only after the Multi-Disciplinary Panel assess the application as eligible.***

This recommendation is **Disagreed**.

The MDP determines the eligibility for priority housing and as such Housing ACT progresses all applications which are assessed as potentially meeting the priority housing category to the Panel.

The decision regarding the application's priority status is made by the MDP, based on the Housing Needs Determination identified in the *Public Rental Housing Assistance Program*. This Determination requires that an applicant demonstrate exceptional and critical needs which can only be met through the urgent provision of public housing.

The capacity of Housing ACT staff to respond to the very high volume of applications requires demand management strategies be put in place.

This is not a comparative needs test, but assessment officers must make daily decisions about the relative urgency of cases in their portfolio in order to prioritise their workload. This prioritisation is done in consultation with team leaders and managers to ensure the most urgent cases progress to the panel for consideration.

It is not possible for all cases to progress to the MDP nor do the needs of all applicants meet the determination for priority housing. However, those assessed as potentially eligible for priority housing do progress to the MDP.

In response to pressures on the MDP and the time frames between an application being assessed as potentially eligible for priority and progressed to the MDP and the time taken for the MDP to hear the cases, Housing ACT has introduced a number of measures to improve this response. The first is an increase in the number of sitting periods of the MDP, which initially commenced with fortnightly sittings. In 2011-12, the MDP convened on 46 occasions and considered 647 applications for priority housing. 526 (81 per cent) of these were approved for priority housing.

The MDP is now accepting the recommendations and write-ups of community sector agencies for cases which they think meet the eligibility criteria for priority housing. This initiative is alleviating pressures on Housing staff to complete the case write-ups of all matters heard by the MDP. It is also better utilising the skills and expertise of the community sector and their knowledge of the needs and circumstances of individual clients.

From the priority waiting list, it is possible for Housing ACT to provide flexible and client focussed housing responses. The allocation of properties for people on priority is determined by the availability of properties, their location, type, size and amenity,

matched with the needs of people on the priority list. An unwieldy priority list would contribute to greater waiting times and higher chance of inappropriate allocations being made. This is counter-intuitive to the desire for Housing ACT to deliver positive housing outcomes.

### **Recommendation 6**

***3.37 The Committee recommends that the rental rebate scheme be reassessed on a 12 monthly basis, instead of the current six months.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

Housing ACT tenants consistently note the burden of rebate application submission and the administration of six-monthly rental rebates requires significant resourcing from Housing ACT. It is also acknowledged by Housing ACT that the failure of tenants to submit rental rebates can cause significant and unwarranted debt escalation.

Housing ACT agrees to prepare policy advice for Government which examines the implications of moving to a 12-monthly rental rebate system. This advice will consider the financial impacts on Housing ACT regarding potential lost revenue and the potential administrative efficiencies which could be achieved. This advice to Government will be provided in 2013.

### **Recommendation 7**

***3.47 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT undertake urgent stakeholder discussions in relation to the policy on repaying debts, and publish a plain English document for tenants explaining the policy and the correct method for calculating the minimum repayment amount.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

Housing ACT has agreed to undertake a review of its debt management processes in consultation with key stakeholders. This review will establish improved and agreed processes for Housing ACT debt management and publish consistent information for all stakeholders including tenants. It will also re-establish a debt review panel for

Domestic Violence related debt. One of the reviews objectives will be to better incorporate Housing ACT's human rights obligations under the *Human Rights Act 2008* with regards to decision making and communication. This review is expected to be finalised by the end of April 2013 with recommendations implemented in 2013.

#### **Recommendation 8**

***3.54 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT conduct an audit of its policy and procedures for administrative decision appeals. Policies should include guidance on what elements are to be considered, when an applicant will be informed of the decision, and ensure applicants are provided with reasons for the decision.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

Housing ACT acknowledges that fair, consistent and transparent decision making is a critical aspect of good public administration and human service delivery. While considerable effort has been undertaken by Housing ACT to improve these aspects of its business practice, it agrees to undertake an audit of its policies and procedures for administrative decision appeals by June 2013.

The audit will examine policies and procedures to ensure they contain guidance on what elements are to be considered, when an applicant will be informed of the decision, and ensure applicants are provided with reasons for the decision.

One of the audits objectives will be to better incorporate Housing ACT's human rights obligations under the *Human Rights Act 2008* with regards to decision making and communication.

#### **Recommendation 9**

***3.55 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT release a fact sheet detailing its appeal process. This should be widely disseminated.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

Housing ACT will release a fact sheet detailing its appeal processes and other aspects of appeal and statutory oversight by April 2013. The fact sheet will be developed in

accordance with Housing ACT's human rights obligations under the *Human Rights Act 2008* with regards to decision making and communication.

### **Recommendation 10**

***3.61 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT re-examine their data collection system for complaints, and provide information regarding the number of resolved matters in their Annual Report. Data surrounding outcomes from unresolved matters should also be included.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

Housing ACT will report on the following data in the Annual Report.

- (1) The number of complaints received by subject Matter.
- (2) The number and percentage of complaints resolved within the published timeframes of 28 days:
- (3) The number and percentage of complaints resolved, but taking longer than 28 days but less than 48 days;
- (4) The number and percentage of complaints resolved, but taking longer than 48 days; and
- (5) The number of complaints not resolved, together with data about these matters.

### **Recommendation 11**

***3.66 The Committee strongly recommends that Housing ACT devise a joint communication strategy with all relevant Government agencies, including the Health Directorate and Disability ACT, and community organisations that regularly engage with tenants. This strategy should be based on the submissions received by the Committee during this Inquiry and be widely disseminated.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

Regular policy changes are communicated to key stakeholders by Housing ACT, including service delivery partners, housing advice and advocacy organisations. A

recent example of this is the individual briefings held with key stakeholders regarding the implementation of fixed-term tenancies for people who had previously been evicted from public housing.

Implementation of this recommendation will need to be considered in light of findings of the review of meetings held with Community Service Directorate (CSD) stakeholders and regular feedback about the high impact of the number of stakeholder forums which are currently held. Future communication strategies will review Housing ACT's human rights obligations under the *Human Rights Act 2008* with regards to decision making and communication.

Disability ACT, Housing ACT and ACT Health have agreed to make better use of their existing stakeholder forums and to ensure that cross-portfolio issues are presented and discussed.

#### **Recommendation 12**

***4.13 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT engage local community organisations involved with the design and ongoing management of accommodation facilities for people with disabilities in their upcoming research process examining alternative models of supported housing.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

ACT Government has social and economic information and analysis of supported accommodation options for people with a disability. This includes work undertaken at a jurisdictional level by PricewaterhouseCoopers under the Disability Policy Reform Working Group. This work along with unmet need data provided as part of the National Minimum Data Set has informed the extensive demographic modelling undertaken by Disability ACT to identify projected demand and cost drivers.

The CSD has developed for consultation a Principle Based Supported Accommodation Framework. The objective is to facilitate and promote new and innovative housing models for people with disability that are grounded in human rights' principles and standards.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will impact on the funding and access to accommodation for eligible people with disability and the ACT Government will work with community organisations and people with disability in implementing the NDIS.

Housing ACT has in the past engaged with community organisations when developing properties for people with a disability, for example the Intentional Community and Capital Housing Canberra. Housing ACT will also work closely with Project Independence in the design of the dwellings to be constructed as part of that program.

### **Recommendation 13**

***4.21 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT only seek evidence of appropriate individual support needs when a suitable property becomes available. A person with a disability should have 30 days to provide evidence of appropriate support from the date of offer, not at the time of applying for social housing.***

This recommendation is **Disagreed**.

This issue has been discussed in response to Recommendation 3.

### **Recommendation 14**

***4.22 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT maintain a register of properties that are suitable for people with disabilities, ranked to show what accessible components are available within that property.***

This recommendation is **Agreed in Principle**.

Housing ACT spends a significant amount of resources (human and capital) to provide appropriate housing for people with a disability. A register as identified in this recommendation would make this allocation of resources more visible and transparent and assist in effective allocation for people with a disability to suitable properties.

Housing ACT does not currently have this information about all properties. However, in the new Total Facilities Management contract which commenced on 1 July 2012, Housing ACT has established a five-year program to undertake property condition

audits (including assessment and identification of existing and new disability modifications) for all Housing ACT properties.

Information on property profiles collected over this period will be used to better match people on the waiting list with disabilities to appropriately modified properties.

Housing ACT agrees in principle to this recommendation, noting that it will work towards the production of a comprehensive property profile audit over the next five years. It should be noted that a register of this type may not be made public, in order to protect the addresses of Housing ACT properties.

### **Recommendation 15**

***4.23 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT maintain a separate waiting list that identifies how many applicants are waiting for accessible accommodation. This should include a breakdown of what features are required by applicants. This information should be included in the Annual Report.***

This recommendation is **Agreed in principle**. However Housing ACT does not agree to information being maintained on a separate register.

Housing ACT agrees that collection of data on who is waiting for accessible public housing, how long they wait, and the features they require in accessing housing will provide a better picture of current and future property modification requirements and the extent to which they are meeting their obligations in this regard. A separate waiting list is however inconsistent with key national and local reforms to establish a common waiting list for entry into public and community housing.

Housing ACT agrees to the recommendation to publish information in the Annual Report on the number of people on its waiting list that are waiting for accessible properties with disability modifications.

In the ACT, the Social Housing Register provides some accessibility data and came into operation on 1 September 2010. Housing ACT's current ability to identify the number

of people with a disability relies on the self identification of people with a disability and their property requirements.

Housing ACT responds to requests for property modification for people who are on the waiting list as well as those who are already Housing ACT tenants. Housing ACT does maintain a register of people who have requested property modifications who are existing tenants.

Housing ACT faces increasing pressures on its resources through responding to the property requirements of people with a disability. Maintaining a register would provide Housing ACT with demand driven data to seek additional resources allocated for this purpose.

#### **Recommendation 16**

***4.24 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government examine measures that reduce or defer the need for social housing where the most appropriate accommodation for a person with a disability is with their family in their family home.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

The ACT Government recognises the right of people with disability to live the life they choose to live. Current practice is to engage early in the life of the person with disability and their family to sustain caring and informal relationships. This includes early assessment and planning. All decisions are carried out in consultation with the person with disability.

#### **Recommendation 17**

***4.25 The Committee recommends that, where Housing ACT decides to move a person with a disability into more appropriate accommodation, prior consideration of that individual's access to community facilities and existing connections with family work and community are considered.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

The ACT Government recognises the importance of establishing and maintaining links with locally based services and maintaining informal relationship. Services such as Local Area Coordination plan with individuals to create sustainable links with the community that are based on the person's goals and aspirations.

Housing ACT does not make decisions around moving group homes. Disability ACT, who does make these decisions, does so with significant consultation with residents and other affected stakeholders. The location of group homes is considered in relation to local amenities and transport and other critical links for social inclusion of its residents.

### **Recommendation 18**

***4.26 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government recognise the dire situation faced by ageing parents with children who have disabilities and examine the range of available services for these families. There should be a focus on options that provide care and accommodation for the whole family unit and provide appropriate ongoing options for the person with a disability.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

The National Disability Agreement identifies ageing parents as a priority group and the Community Services Directorate funds initiatives, including the Mature Carers program to supports people with a disability to remain in their family home. Services include planning and case management that supports sustainable plans for long term living arrangements.

The NDIS will strengthen the supports available to ageing parents with children who have disabilities.

## **Recommendation 19**

***4.27 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT annual reports include data relating to the provision of social housing for people with disabilities. This should be separated from general supported accommodation figures.***

This recommendation is **Agreed in Principle**.

Housing ACT does not currently have the capacity to report on all this information at this time. National work is being undertaken to improve disability reporting in the social housing minimum data set and Housing ACT will implement these improved measures when they are agreed.

It should be noted that the ability to report on disability is contingent on the self-identification of people with a disability.

The ACT Government is contributing to the development of a national database to capture the potential population that is eligible for reasonable and necessary supports under the NDIS. This database is currently in the early design phase.

## **Recommendation 20**

***4.42 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake a review of potential measures it can take to assist young people to obtain and maintain private rental tenancies. The ACT Government should consider establishing a private rental bond scheme or provide references relating to school attendances and the like as part of the review.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

Housing ACT established a program under its 2011-12 Youth Housing and Homelessness Service reform called the Friendly Landlord Service. The Service accommodates young people in shared living arrangements in 1, 2 or 3 bedroom properties. In the second year of operation the service will also work with private market landlords to expand the availability of private rental housing options for young people.

Housing ACT has an existing rental bond program which encourages people into private rental. Housing ACT will disseminate information on this program to youth service providers and other stakeholders to make young people aware of the program. Housing ACT may consider the provision of rental and other references in consultation with stakeholders.

#### **Recommendation 21**

***4.46 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT explores options aimed at enabling increased stability in the supply of houses to the Refugee Transitional Housing Program and an extension of the transitional period to 12 months.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

Housing ACT agrees to explore options for increasing the supply and stability of transitional housing properties for the program, noting that there are a range of issues associated with exiting the program regardless of the timeframes associated with the transitional housing.

Often the six month period compels refugees to search for alternative accommodation options to public housing, particularly where they have capacity to live in other tenure. For others where public housing is a reasonable and likely exit point, the six-month transitional housing option aligns with Housing ACT residency eligibility criteria. The extension of transitional housing arrangements is assessed on a case by case basis.

A key issue regarding increasing the period of ACT transitional housing support is that the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship provides time-limited support for newly arrived refugees. Any potential changes to ACT housing programs will require consultation with community and Commonwealth Government stakeholders.

## **Recommendation 22**

***4.49 The Committee recommends that a mental health housing strategy be developed in conjunction with community partners and in recognition of best practice.***

This recommendation is **Agreed in Principle**.

People with mental health problems are only one vulnerable population group within the ACT who require a range of accommodation and support options.

The development and consideration of the housing needs of people with mental illness must take into account the availability and existing stock profile of ACT social and public housing and the limitations which this places on Housing ACT in terms of allocating to meet the needs of people with mental illness or with other complex needs. It is not feasible or possible to expect that Housing ACT only house people with mental illness in free-standing properties or outside of multi-unit properties.

A key aspect of successfully housing people with mental health issues is, therefore, the availability and adequacy of community based support services to assist people to live within the community and to manage their mental health and other issues which may arise in their property allocation.

The NDIS may considerably alter the choices that people with disabilities, including chronic mental illness, make in regards to their housing needs. Their purchasing power should drive the range and type of accommodation responses they require.

## **Recommendation 23**

***4.50 The Committee recommends that the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative be evaluated, and expanded if shown to have positive outcomes.***

This recommendation is **Noted**.

The Housing and Support Initiative (HASI) was evaluated in 2011-12 and expanded through sub-acute health funding via the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospitals. HASI has 10 approved packages, the Housing and Recovery

Initiative (HARI) has up to 30 places in 2012-13 with an additional 10 places coming in 2013-14.

The majority of HASI/HARI clients, or other people with mental illness who would qualify for HASI, will be eligible for NDIS packages. The NDIS will expand number of mental health consumers able to access, through purchase, of HASI type services.

#### **Recommendation 24**

***4.52 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT begin widely advertising that nominations are open for the next round of Joint Champions Group members and encourage widespread membership.***

This recommendation is **Noted**.

The Joint Champions Group (JCG) process was revised in 2012 to reduce the number of members from over 100 to a smaller and more effective group comprising 26 members chosen through an Expression of Interest Process. Members selected ensure that the JCG membership reflects the demographics and diversity of the public housing tenant population and contains members from all public housing types and location. The JCG also contains a mix of previous and new members.

#### **Recommendation 25**

***4.58 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT Annual Reports include information on the breakdown of properties that were not available for sale through the Shared Equity Scheme.***

This recommendation is **Agreed in Principle**.

The availability of properties for the Shared Equity Scheme is partly determined by whether a tenant applies to purchase their property. There are three categories of properties when assessed for potential sale.

- i) Not for sale (Separate Title) - where the property is unable to be separately titled, it is not able to be sold.

- ii) Not for Sale (Portfolio Development) - properties not available for shared equity or sale to tenant are deemed so for the purposes of managing the larger portfolio to provide maximum benefit. These properties have been assessed as having redevelopment potential which will yield portfolio outcomes and are not for sale.
- iii) For Sale – properties which are separately titled or which do not have redevelopment potential to yield portfolio outcomes. These properties are for sale in accordance with Shared Equity guidelines.

Housing ACT agrees to publish these categories of properties on its website and to provide this information to all tenants who make an application for shared equity. It would be possible to provide information on the number of applications made against each category.

#### **Recommendation 26**

***4.59 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT make available information on how to seek a review, or appeal a decision made in relation to purchasing a property through the Shared Equity Scheme.***

This recommendation is **Agreed**.

The Shared Equity Scheme is part of the Sale to Tenant program. Accordingly, applicants seeking to purchase public housing properties are able to have decisions made under the Sale to Tenant program reviewed. This includes the Housing ACT decision not to sell the property to them.

It should be noted that financial decisions regarding Shared Equity are made by the financial partner in the initiative, IMB, not Housing ACT. It is also not possible for Housing ACT to consider the sale of properties that cannot be separately titled, such as multi-unit sites.

Review of Housing ACT decisions are conducted by a more senior officer from Housing and Community Services. There is no right of appeal to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) following the Housing ACT review. Information about

the opportunity to seek a review and the process of review will be made clearer in the documentation that is available.

Housing ACT notes that the majority of applications seeking review of decisions arising from the Sale to Tenant program occur because of the inability to consider properties for sale without separate title. In recognition of the limitations this may place on people seeking access to Sale to Tenant and Shared Equity programs, Housing ACT has established a targeted shared equity scheme which allows tenants to consider transfer into another saleable property to access these home ownership options.

### **Recommendation 27**

***5.17 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the current asset management strategy an interim document, and immediately undertake activities to ensure that the information identified through best practice is collected and integrated into Housing ACT systems.***

This recommendation is **Disagreed**.

The Government endorsed the Public Housing Asset Management Strategy (PHAMS) 2012 – 2017 in December 2011 which sets out the overarching strategies, principles and objectives that guide the management of the public housing portfolio. The PHAMS was made public in January 2012.

The Strategy aims to provide accommodation to the most vulnerable people while also maintaining the viability of the portfolio. The framework that it establishes is underpinned by decision making processes based on information about the properties.

Housing ACT will investigate options to utilise existing Government processes, such as the annual infrastructure plan, to report annual work priorities and progress against the PHAMS.

## **Recommendation 28**

***5.18 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT use the integrated system to develop a comprehensive maintenance and management strategy, and that this strategy be widely disseminated.***

This recommendation is **Noted**.

It is considered that an integrated system has been put in place which underpins the management and maintenance of the public housing properties. This strategy includes alignment with the PHAMS strategic principles and a series of other factors which influence property and maintenance decisions. These include the age and location of the property, previous maintenance expenditure, planning and land zoning and block size and the density of public housing in the street and suburb.

Asset management strategies are being refined under the new Total Facilities Management contract to include information about energy efficiency and disability aspects of public housing properties.

The Public Housing Asset Management Strategy 2012 – 2017 is available on the Community Services Directorate website. The annual maintenance program prepared by the facilities manager (Spotless), which is accepted by Housing and Community Services will be published on the CSD website. The 2012-13 program has already been placed on the CSD website.

## **Appendix 1: Summary of ACT Government Responses to**

### **Recommendations of the Standing Committee on Health Community and Social Services Report No. 8: *The Provision of Social Housing in the ACT***

| <b>Recommendation Number</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Response</b> | <b>Comments</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation 1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Agreed          | Housing ACT will undertake a review of the Gateway Quality Improvement Project by April 2012. The Terms of Reference for this review will consider, among other issues, the success of actions implemented through the Project response to the ACT Ombudsman's recommendations in its report, <i>Assessment of an Application for Priority Housing, June 2011</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT undertake a review of the Gateway Quality Improvement Project. This review should include reference to all areas of concern identified by the ACT Ombudsman's Report and be widely disseminated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Recommendation 2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Agreed          | This recommendation relates to the key finding of the Report, which is the need for HACT to improve its communication (and service delivery) with tenants and applicants as well as other stakeholders.<br>a) agreed<br>b) agreed<br>c) agreed<br>d) Noted. It is only be possible to publish average to maximum waiting times for community housing models. Publication of this information will be undertaken in consultation with community housing providers as it will be necessary to manage client expectations around waiting times to ensure false expectations are not created through publication of this information. |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT undertake an audit of its website and ensure that:<br>a. All documents are dated.<br>b. All documents are presented by when they are most commonly required according to the social housing cycle, instead of the current alphabet approach. For example, information about accepting a property should follow information about the application process.<br>c. All links to legislation on the website and within documents provided are current.<br>d. Information on the waiting time for different models of community housing is provided. |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Recommendation 3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Disagreed       | The priority allocation system. Currently, this supporting documentation and evidence of community support services is used as a way of assessing a tenant's ability to sustain a tenancy and to help assess the priority needs category the application is registered on.<br><br>The evidence of community supports also manages risks that vulnerable tenants have adequate and appropriate supports involved so that they are able to maintain their tenancy and that their support requirements are being met. This includes recognition of disability supports etc.                                                          |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT only require essential eligibility documentation at initial application interviews. Any other documentation, such as evidence of community based support services, should only be required when a suitable property is identified.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |           | Collection of supporting documentation at the allocation stage would lengthen timeframes for allocation beyond the current standard for property turnaround of 30 days.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Recommendation 4</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Agreed    | <p>Consistent feedback from service users is that the application form needs to be as simple as possible. Information on the different types of social housing is provided in the application kit.</p> <p>HACT agrees to examine the information provided to applicants and revise this in accordance with this recommendation. This will be undertaken in consultation with key providers and the Joint Champions Group.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT amend the current application form to include more information on the different types of social housing available, and the different management and rent arrangements for each particular type of housing.             |           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Recommendation 5</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Disagreed | <p>The Multi-Disciplinary Panel determines the eligibility for priority housing and as such Housing ACT progresses all applications which are assessed as potentially meeting the priority housing category to the Panel.</p> <p>The decision regarding the application's priority status is made by the MDP, based on the Housing Needs Determination identified in the Public Housing Rental Program. This Determination requires that an applicant demonstrate exceptional and critical needs which can only be met through the urgent provision of public housing.</p> <p>The capacity of Housing ACT staff to respond to the very high volume of applications requires demand management strategies be put in place. These strategies are critical to maintaining the occupational health and wellbeing of the assessing officers and also influence which applications progress to the MDP for priority assessment.</p> <p>This is not a comparative needs test, but assessment officers must make daily decisions about the relative urgency of cases in their portfolio in order to prioritise their workload. This prioritisation is done in consultation with team leaders and managers to ensure the most urgent cases progress to the panel for consideration.</p> |
| The Committee recommends that all applications determined as eligible for priority housing be provided to the Multi-Disciplinary Panel, and that a comparative needs test be applied only after the Multi-Disciplinary Panel assess the application as eligible. |           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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| <b>Recommendation 6</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Agreed | Housing ACT agrees to prepare policy advice for Government which examines the implications of moving to a 12-monthly rental rebate system. This advice will consider the financial impacts on Housing ACT regarding potential lost revenue and the potential administrative efficiencies which could be achieved. This advice to Government will be provided in early 2013.                                                                                                |
| The Committee recommends that the rental rebate scheme be reassessed on a 12 monthly basis, instead of the current six months.                                                                                                                                                                                             |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Recommendation 7</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Agreed | Housing ACT has agreed to undertake a review of its debt management processes in consultation with key stakeholders. This review will establish improved and agreed processes for Housing ACT debt management and publish consistent information for all stakeholders including tenants. It will also re-establish a debt review panel for Domestic Violence related debt. This review is expected to be finalised by April 2013 with recommendations implemented in 2013. |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT undertake urgent stakeholder discussions in relation to the policy on repaying debts, and publish a plain English document for tenants explaining the policy and the correct method for calculating the minimum repayment amount.                                                |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Recommendation 8</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Agreed | Housing ACT acknowledges that fair, consistent and transparent decision making is a critical aspect of good public administration and human service delivery. While considerable effort has been undertaken by Housing ACT to improve these aspects of its business practice, it agrees to undertake an audit of its policies and procedures for administrative decision appeals by June 2013.                                                                             |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT conduct an audit of its policy and procedures for administrative decision appeals. Policies should include guidance on what elements are to be considered, when an applicant will be informed of the decision, and ensure applicants are provided with reasons for the decision. |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Recommendation 9</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Agreed | Housing ACT will release a fact sheet detailing its appeal processes and other aspects of appeal and statutory oversight by April 2013.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT release a fact sheet detailing its appeal process. This should be widely disseminated.                                                                                                                                                                                           |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Recommendation 10</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Agreed | HACT will report on the following data within the Annual Report.<br><br>(6) Number of complaints received by subject Matter. (as currently)<br>(7) Number and % of complaints resolved within the published timeframes of 28 days<br>(8) Number and % of complaints resolved, but taking longer than 28days but less than 48days                                                                                                                                           |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT re-examine their data collection system for complaints, and provide information regarding the number of resolved matters in their Annual Report. Data surrounding outcomes from unresolved matters should also be included.                                                      |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |        | <p>(9) Number and % of complaints resolved, but taking longer than 48days</p> <p>(10) Number of complaints not resolved, together with data about these matters. (this figure should actually be zero)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Recommendation 11</b></p> <p>The Committee strongly recommends that Housing ACT devise a joint communication strategy with all relevant Government agencies, including the Health Directorate and Disability ACT, and community organisations that regularly engage with tenants. This strategy should be based on the submissions received by the Committee during this Inquiry and be widely disseminated.</p> | Agreed | <p>Regular policy changes are communicated to key stakeholders by Housing ACT, including service delivery partners, housing advice and advocacy organisations. A recent example of this are the individual briefings held with key stakeholders regarding the implementation of fixed-term tenancies for people who had previously been evicted from public housing.</p> <p>Implementation of this recommendation will need to be considered in light of findings of the review of meetings with held CSD stakeholders and regular feedback about the high impact of the number of stakeholder forums which are currently held.</p> <p>Disability ACT, Housing ACT and ACT Health have agreed to make better use of their existing stakeholder forums and to ensure that cross-portfolio issues are presented and discussed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>Recommendation 12</b></p> <p>The Committee recommends that Housing ACT engage local community organisations involved with the design and ongoing management of accommodation facilities for people with disabilities in their upcoming research process examining alternative models of supported housing.</p>                                                                                                   | Agreed | <p>ACT Government has social and economic information and analysis of supported accommodation options for people with disability. This includes work undertaken at a jurisdictional level by PricewaterhouseCoopers under the Disability Policy Reform Working Group. This work along with unmet need data provided as part of the National Minimum Data Set has informed the extensive demographic modelling undertaken by Disability ACT to identify projected demand and cost drivers.</p> <p>The Community Services Directorate has developed for consultation a Principle Based Supported Accommodation Framework. The objective is to facilitate and promote new and innovative housing models for people with disability that are grounded in human rights' principles and standards.</p> <p>The NDIS will impact on the funding and access to accommodation for eligible people with disability and the ACT Government will work with community organisations and people with disability in implementing the NDIS.</p> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                     | Housing ACT uses an occupational therapist when undertaking disabled modifications to existing public housing properties. Housing ACT has in the past engaged with community organisations when developing properties for people with a disability such as Intentional Community and Tas Housing. Housing ACT will also work closely with Project Independence in the design of the dwellings to be constructed as part of that program.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Recommendation 13</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Disagree            | This issue has been discussed in response to Recommendation 3.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT only seek evidence of appropriate individual support needs when a suitable property becomes available. A person with a disability should have 30 days to provide evidence of appropriate support from the date of offer, not at the time of applying for social housing |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Recommendation 14</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Agree in principle  | <p>Housing ACT does not currently have this information on all properties. However, in the new TFM contract which commenced 1 July 2012, Housing ACT has established a five-year program in place to undertake property condition audits (including assessment and identification of existing and new disability modifications) for all Housing ACT properties.</p> <p>Housing ACT agrees in principle to this recommendation, noting that it will work towards the production of a comprehensive property [profile audit over the next five years. It should be noted that a register of this type may not be made public, in order to protect the addresses of Housing ACT properties.</p> |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT maintain a register of properties that are suitable for people with disabilities, ranked to show what accessible components are available within that property.                                                                                                         |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Recommendation 15</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Agreed in Principle | <p>The development of a common waiting list for all social housing applications was part of a national reform agenda. Housing ACT implemented the Social Housing Register in 2010.</p> <p>Housing ACT agrees to the data collection of those waiting for accessible accommodation but not to that information being maintained on a separate register.</p> <p>Housing ACT agrees to the recommendation to publish information in the annual report on the number of people on its waiting list with and the features required.</p>                                                                                                                                                           |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT maintain a separate waiting list that identifies how many applicants are waiting for accessible accommodation. This should include a breakdown of what features are required by applicants. This information should be included in the Annual Report.                   |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |        | <p>Housing ACT's current ability to identify the number of people with a disability relies on the self identification of people with disability and their property requirements.</p> <p>Housing ACT responds to requests for property modification for people who are on the waiting list as well as those who are already Housing ACT tenants. Housing ACT does maintain a register of people who have requested property modification to enable them to age in place.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Recommendation 16</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Agree  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| The Committee recommends that the ACT Government examine measures that reduce or defer the need for social housing where the most appropriate accommodation for a person with a disability is with their family in their family home.                                                                                                              |        | The ACT Government recognises the right of people with disability to live the life they choose to live. Current practice is to engage early in the life of the person with disability and their family to sustain caring and informal relationships. This includes early assessment and planning. All decisions are carried out in consultation with the person with disability.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Recommendation 17</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Agreed |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| The Committee recommends that, where Housing ACT decides to move a person with a disability into more appropriate accommodation, prior consideration of that individual's access to community facilities and existing connections with family work and community are considered.                                                                   |        | <p>The ACT Government recognises the importance of establishing and maintaining links with locally based services and maintaining informal relationship. Services such as Local Area Coordination plan with individuals to create sustainable links with the community that are based on the person's goals and aspirations.</p> <p>Housing ACT does not make decisions around moving group homes. Disability ACT does make these decisions with significant consultation with residents and other affected stakeholders. The location of group homes considers their relation to local amenities and transport and other critical links for social inclusion of its residents.</p> |
| <b>Recommendation 18</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Agreed |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| The Committee recommends that the ACT Government recognise the dire situation faced by ageing parents with children who have disabilities and examine the range of available services for these families. There should be a focus on options that provide care and accommodation for the whole family unit and provide appropriate ongoing options |        | <p>The National Disability Agreement identifies ageing parents as a priority group and the ACT Government funds initiatives, including the Mature Carers program to supports people with a disability to remain in their family home. Services include planning and case management that supports sustainable plans for long term living arrangements.</p> <p>The NDIS will strengthen the supports available to ageing parents with children who have disabilities.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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| for the person with a disability.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Recommendation 19</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Agreed in principle | Housing ACT does not currently have the capacity to report on all of this information at this time. National work is being undertaken to improve disability reporting in the social housing minimum data set.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT Annual Reports include data relating to the provision of social housing for people with disabilities. This should be separated from general supported accommodation figures.                                                                                                                              |                     | The ACT Government is contributing to the development of a national database to capture the potential population that is eligible for reasonable and necessary supports under the NDIS. This database is currently in the early design phase.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Recommendation 20</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Agreed              | The ACT Government established a program under the Youth Housing and Homelessness Service reform called Friendly Landlord Service. The Service accommodates young people in shared living arrangements in 1, 2 or 3 bedroom properties. In the second year of operation the service will also work with private market landlords to expand the availability of private rental housing options for young people. |
| The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake a review of potential measures it can take to assist young people to obtain and maintain private rental tenancies. The ACT Government should consider establishing a private rental bond scheme or provide references relating to school attendances and the like as part of the review. |                     | Housing ACT has a rental bond program which encourages people into private rental. Housing ACT will disseminate information on this program to youth service providers and other stakeholders to make young people aware of the program. Housing ACT may consider the provision of rental and other references in consultation with stakeholders. Rental references may be considered.                          |
| <b>Recommendation 21</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Agreed              | ACT Government agrees to explore options for increasing the supply and stability of transitional housing properties for the program, noting that there are a range of issues associated with exiting the program regardless of the timeframes associated with the transitional housing.                                                                                                                         |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT explores options aimed at enabling increased stability in the supply of houses to the Refugee Transitional Housing Program and an extension of the transitional period to 12 months.                                                                                                                      |                     | A key issue regarding increasing the period of ACT transitional housing support is that the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship provides time-limited support for newly arrived refugees. Any potential changes to ACT housing programs will require consultation with community and Commonwealth Government stakeholders.                                                                   |
| <b>Recommendation 22</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Agree in Principle  | People with mental health problems are only one vulnerable population group within the ACT who require a range of accommodation and support options.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| The Committee recommends that a mental health housing strategy be developed in conjunction with community                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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| partners and in recognition of best practice.                                                                                                                                         |                    | <p>The development and consideration of the housing needs of people with mental illness must take into account the availability and existing stock profile of ACT social and public housing and the limitations which this places on Housing ACT in terms of allocating to meet the needs of people with mental illness of other complex needs. It is not feasible or possible to expect that Housing ACT only house people with mental illness in free-standing properties or outside of multi-unit properties.</p> <p>A key aspect of successfully housing people with mental health issues is, therefore, the availability and adequacy of community based support services to assist people to live within the community and to manage their mental health and other issues which may arise in their property allocation.</p> <p>The National Disability Insurance Scheme may considerably alter the choices that people with disabilities, including chronic mental illness, make in regards to their housing needs. Their purchasing power should drive the range and type of accommodation responses they require.</p> |
| <b>Recommendation 23</b>                                                                                                                                                              | Noted              | <p>HASI has been evaluated and expanded through sub-acute health funding via the NPA on Improving Public Hospitals. HASI has 10 approved packages, the Housing and Recovery Initiative (HARI) has up to 30 places in 2012-13 with an additional 10 places coming in 2013-14.</p> <p>The majority of HASI/HARI clients, or other people with mental illness who would qualify for HASI, will be eligible for NDIS packages. The NDIS will expand number of mental health consumers able to access, through purchase, of HASI type services.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| The Committee recommends that the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative be evaluated, and expanded if shown to have positive outcomes.                                         |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Recommendation 24</b>                                                                                                                                                              | Noted              | <p>JCG process was revised in 2012 to reduce number of members and increase effectiveness of the group. Members selected meet a range of demographics and reflect the diversity of public housing type and location.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT begin widely advertising that nominations are open for the next round of Joint Champions Group members and encourage widespread membership. |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Recommendation 25</b>                                                                                                                                                              | Agree in Principle | <p>The availability of properties for the Shared Equity Scheme is partly determined by whether a tenant applies to purchase their property. Where the property is unable to</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT Annual                                                                                                                                      |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| <p>Reports include information on the breakdown of properties that were not available for sale through the Shared Equity Scheme.</p>                                                                                                  |               | <p>separately titled, it is not possible for the sale to proceed. Other properties not available for shared equity or sale to tenant are deemed so for the purposes of managing the larger portfolio to provide maximum benefit.</p> <p>It would be possible for Housing ACT to provide information on the number of applications for Shared Equity which have not proceeded because of these asset management decisions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>Recommendation 26</b></p> <p>The Committee recommends that Housing ACT make available information on how to seek a review, or appeal a decision made in relation to purchasing a property through the Shared Equity Scheme.</p> | <p>Agreed</p> | <p>The Shared Equity Scheme is part of the Sale to Tenant program. Accordingly, applicants seeking to purchase public housing properties are able to have decisions made under the Sale to Tenant program reviewed. This includes the Housing ACT decision not to sell the property to them.</p> <p>It should be noted that financial decisions regarding Shared Equity are made by the financial partner in the initiative, IMB, not Housing ACT. It is also not possible for Housing ACT to consider the sale of properties that cannot be separately titled, such as multi-unit sites.</p> <p>Review of Housing ACT decisions are reviewed by a more senior officer within Housing and Community Services. There is no right of appeal to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal following the Housing ACT review.</p> <p>Information about the opportunity to seek a review and the process of review will be made clearer in the documentation that is available.</p> <p>Housing ACT notes that the majority of review of decisions arising from the Sale to Tenant program occur because of the inability to consider properties without separate title. In recognition of the limitations this may place on people seeking access to Sale to Tenant and Shared Equity programs, Housing ACT has established a targeted shared equity scheme which allows tenants to consider transfer into another saleable property to access these home ownership options.</p> |

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| <b>Recommendation 27</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Disagree | <p>The Government has endorsed the Public Housing Asset Management Strategy 2012 – 2017 which sets out the overarching strategies, principles and objectives that guide the management of the public housing portfolio.</p> <p>The Strategy aims to provide accommodation to the most vulnerable people while also maintaining the viability of the portfolio. The framework that it establishes is underpinned by decision making processes based on information about the properties. Further information is contained in the Response report.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the current asset management strategy an interim document, and immediately undertake activities to ensure that the information identified through best practice is collected and integrated into Housing ACT systems. |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Recommendation 28</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Noted    | <p>It is considered that an integrated system has been put in place which underpins the management and maintenance of the public housing properties. This strategy is being refined under the new Total Facilities Management contract to include information about energy efficiency and disability aspects of public housing properties.</p> <p>The Public Housing Asset Management Strategy 2012 – 2017 is available on the Community Services Directorate website. Further information will be prepared about the condition audit process and details of how the planned and responsive maintenance programs are prepared. This information will also be posted on the Community Services Directorate website.</p> <p>Details of these two documents will be included in the next Tenants newsletter which will be issued towards the end of 2012.</p> |
| The Committee recommends that Housing ACT use the integrated system to develop a comprehensive maintenance and management strategy, and that this strategy be widely disseminated.                                                                                              |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |