



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–2025

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs

In relation to: Public housing and Squatting policy

Hearing: 10 November 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 19-20

Transcript provided: 14 November 2025

Answer Due: 21 November 2025

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Just on that, in relation to squatting, you know, this is one of the areas where you are going to see people with high and complex needs. I just wanted to follow up on something from Estimate's hearings, where I asked about squatting, you know, Housing ACT's policy for engaging squatters. And I see you would said, "We do not just kick them out. We are humans. We talk to them about putting in an application form." Ms Rule(?) [9.52.38] said:

'No, there is not a specific policy document that I can provide to you, but our standard practice is to work with anybody that we find who is insecure accommodation which may be through squatting or people that we know are on the street or wherever they might be, connect them to homeless services and try to find accommodation.'

But in an answer to a question on notice it said that if Housing ACT receives a report of squatting or trespassing, operational practice is that Housing ACT will work to understand if another authorised occupant is occupying an Housing ACT asset if that is confirmed the field officer will complete a— attend site visit, issue an unauthorised occupants notice to the unauthorised occupant. They may fix that to the property door or the point of entry. They are required to contact ACT Policing once that is been done but there is just no mention of what the engagement with support services is in the response I received to the question on notice. So I am trying to understand if Housing ACT does engage with people who are squatting.

Ms Berry: What is the number of that question on notice?

THE CHAIR: I am going to have to check for you, sorry, but it was in Estimates.

Ms Berry: Can you take that question on notice?

THE CHAIR: I can take that question on notice. I might not be able to get back within two weeks, but I will see how I go.

Ms Berry: Thank you. Because I can just have a look at that because that seems—that is a bit black and white and I do not think that is the way Housing ACT works generally. They would go in and talk first. The first part is always who are these people? What do they need a—anybody who's experiencing homelessness is experiencing homelessness wherever they are, and Housing ACT's job through however means is to try and offer them support if they are willing and or put them in touch with support services. The first act is not a straight up eviction or move on notice but there might be circumstances where it is dangerous or they have been known squatting for a while it is you could not generalise it too much, like, there would be different circumstances. I do not know if you have got anything else.

Ms Berry: I will look at that question on notice and the response that was provided I think it is just missing some of that information that might be more useful.

THE CHAIR: I might also look at 327 and 328 in Estimates as well. All right. Is that what your—of not having to take it on notice. Okay. So you are going to have a look at that, take that on notice and perhaps provide some more information back on notice.

Ms Berry: Yes. Yes. I will do adjustments to those if it is necessary.

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

I note that no record of QON 158 exists relating to this, however, in addressing your question, the additional information is made in reference to QON 327 and QON 328.

Housing ACT have standard operating procedures that guide the response and management when responding to reports of Unauthorised Occupants (UO) in vacant properties. Previous responses to QON 327 and 328 outline the general response actions to UO.

Additionally, the individual circumstances and situation of each report and proceeding attendance, determines the approach taken by HACT. This includes safety assessments, physical inspections, communication and legal notices.

It is common, when responding to reports of Unauthorised Occupants, that no one is onsite at the time of inspection by HACT. In these cases, HACT officials will affix a standard notice to the property entry which advises that occupation is unauthorised and provide contact information for support services and Housing ACT. In cases where Unauthorised Occupants are onsite at the time of inspection, where safe to do so, HACT officials will engage with the person/s to provide guidance on next steps and when appropriate, serve the notice directly, as this is a legal requirement, after assessing the situation and individual circumstances.

The standard notice has been attached for reference.

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Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' or 'B' shape with a loop at the end.

Date:

24/1/25

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



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2025–2026 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2025–2026

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs

Reference: Health and Community Services Directorate

Hearing: 6 August 2025

In relation to: Housing ACT and Squatting

Question received: 7 August 2025

Answer Due: 21 August 2025

(1) For the 24/25 financial year, could you please provide a breakdown of (deidentified as needed to address any privacy concerns):

- (a) all reports of squatters in vacant Housing ACT properties.
- (b) details of the response taken to each report, including any actions taken by Housing ACT staff.

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

- (1) For the 2024-25 financial year, Housing ACT Field Officers (FO) attended 88 properties for the purpose of identifying and/or confirming whether a vacant Housing ACT asset had unauthorised occupants.
- (2) Housing ACT is unable to provide the details of each report in the timeframes.

If an unauthorised occupant has been confirmed, the FO will complete a two to attend site visit, to issue an Unauthorised Occupants Notice, to the unauthorised occupant.

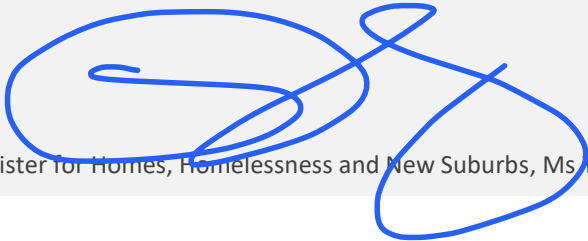
The FO may also affix the document to the property door and /or point of entry.

The FO is required to contact ACT Policing once the Unauthorised Occupants Notice has been provided to the individual or affixed to the property.

The FO will then liaise with ACT Policing if assistance is required. Once the unauthorised occupant has left, the FO is then required to contact the Total Facilities Management and arrange for the property to be re-secured.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2025–2026

Signature:



Date:

25/08/25

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



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2025–2026 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2025–2026

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson

Addressed to: Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs

Reference: Health and Community Services Directorate

Hearing: 6 August 2025

In relation to: Squatting Policy

Question received: 7 August 2025

Answer Due: 21 August 2025

- (1) Can you please provide a written copy of your policies and procedures for responding to reports of squatting in Housing ACT properties?

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

- (1) Housing ACT manages public housing properties in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*.

If Housing ACT receives a report of squatting or trespass, operational practice is that Housing ACT will work to understand if an unauthorised occupant is occupying a Housing ACT asset. If an unauthorised occupant has been confirmed, the Housing ACT Field Officer (FO) will complete a two to attend site visit, to issue an Unauthorised Occupants Notice, to the unauthorised occupant. The FO may also affix the document to the property door and /or point of entry. The FO is required to contact ACT Policing once the Unauthorised Occupants Notice has been provided to the individual or affixed to the property. The FO will then liaise with ACT Policing if assistance is required. Once the unauthorised occupant has left, the FO is then required to contact the TFM and arrange for the property to be re-secured.

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Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2025–2026

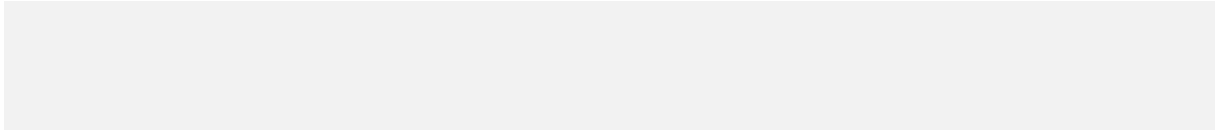


Signature:

Date:

25/08/25

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



To: **Unauthorised Occupant(s)**

I act on behalf of the Commissioner for Social Housing in the ACT.

**You are hereby notified that you are required to vacate
the property known as**

immediately.

If you fail to comply with this notice, action will be taken with the assistance of the Australian Federal Police, to remove you from the land.

AFP and a Housing ACT representative will be attending the property to ensure the property is vacated.

The Salvation Army – FIRST Canberra (Central Intake Service) can be contacted on 1800 176 468.

FIRST Canberra has access to a number of support services within Canberra to assist with connecting you to the appropriate support required.

Housing ACT can be contacted on 13 34 27.

Yours sincerely,

For the Commissioner for Social Housing in the ACT.

A Person authorised by the Commissioner for Social Housing in the ACT.