



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

Mr Mark Parton MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA : To ask the Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services

Ref: Budget Outlook. p. 66

Hearing Date: 27 July 2023

In relation to: Eligibility for Social Housing Assistance

In relation to the statement on p. 66 of the Budget Outlook that, 'consistent with the ACT Housing Strategy, the Government is focusing on low-to-moderate income households and those most vulnerable to homelessness,' will the minister please answer the following questions:

- (1) For a single person, what is the current income limit for the purpose of assessing eligibility for social housing assistance (expressed in dollars)?
- (2) Does a single person earning minimum wage (\$23.23 per hour) and working 38 hours per week in a permanent position meet the current income limit for social housing (assuming no other income)?
- (3) If so, what would this person's weekly rent be after application of the rental rebate formula?
- (4) Does a single person earning minimum wage (\$23.23 per hour plus 25 per cent casual loading) and working 38 hours per week in a casual position meet the current income limit for social housing (assuming no other income)?
- (5) If so, what would this person's weekly rent be after application of the rental rebate formula?
- (6) Why is casual loading included as income when assessing eligibility for social housing assistance when it is intended to compensate casual workers for the lack of paid leave provisions, but the value of paid leave provisions is not included as income when assessing the eligibility of a person in permanent employment?

MINISTER VASSAROTTI: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

- (1) The single person income limit for housing assistance eligibility is \$825.96 gross per week. This equates to an annual income of \$42,949.92.
- (2) A single person earning \$45,902.48 per annum is not eligible for housing assistance. The applicant would be over the income barrier by \$2,952.56 per annum. It is important to note, under the *Housing Assistance, Public Rental Housing Assistance Program (2023)* discretion for hardship may be exercised to disregard income for the application.
- (3) This applicant would not be eligible for housing assistance, however if discretion was provided, the rent payable per week would be \$220.70 or full market rent, whichever is less.
- (4) A single person earning \$57,378.10 per annum is not eligible for housing assistance.
- (5) This applicant would not be eligible for housing assistance however if discretion was provided, the rent payable would be \$275.85 per week or full market rent, whichever is less.
- (6) Gross income is used to assess eligibility for housing assistance in aim of ensuring equity and consistency. The value of a permanent employee's leave entitlements is included in their gross income, similarly to leave loading which is included in casual employees' income.

It is important to acknowledge that eligibility is considered in relation to an individual or households' ability to secure housing in the private market. Gross income is utilised in assessments to reflect the money available to the household in aim of securing accommodation.

This is also consistent with rental rebate entitlements where recreational leave is included in the financial assessment.

Exempt income and assets determined under the Housing Assistance Act 2007 is prescribed in the *Housing Assistance Public Rental Housing Assistance Program (Exempt Income and Assets) Determination) 2019 (1)*, Notifiable instrument NI2019-504.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024

Signature: 

Date: 14/8/2023

By the Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services, Rebecca Vassarotti MLA