



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–2025

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs

Reference: Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs/Health and Community Services Directorate

Hearing: 10 November 2025

In relation to: Fires in Housing ACT Properties

Question received: 11 November 2025

Answer Due: 25 November 2025

1. How many fires have there been reported in Housing ACT multi-unit properties during the 24/25 financial year?
2. What are the Housing ACT policies and procedures for responding to a fire in a multi-unit property, and does this include communication with tenants potentially affected by the fire?
3. Can you provide the Housing ACT policy for multi-unit property allocation?
 - a. What additional factors are considered when allocating tenancies within multi-unit properties.
 - b. Does Housing ACT consider any history of dangerous behaviour relating to fires when allocating tenancies in multi-unit properties?
4. How many Housing ACT multi-unit properties have back-to-base fire alarm systems?
5. For properties where the fire alarms are not back-to-base, have all tenants been informed that they are required to call emergency services when the alarm sounds?

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

1. There has been (6) six multi-unit property fires during the 2024 - 2025 financial year.
2. Response to a multi-unit property fire is varied and nuanced and is dependent on a number of factors. If after hours, the Housing Assistance On-Call Team will be notified if relocation of the affected tenants is required.

The On-Call Team will support the tenant into alternative accommodation and refer to the temporary relocation team the next business day to support the longer-term needs of the tenant. If the fire occurs during business days/hours, the temporary relocation team is responsible for engaging with the tenants in relation to alternative accommodation

requirements. If a large-scale event, a team of Housing Managers will attend the site to engage with the broader tenant base and community.

3.

- a. Applicants are identified through the waitlist, initially from the Priority Register. If the property on offer does not appropriately meet the needs or requirements of applicants in the Priority Housing Category it is offered to those on the High Needs and then Standard Registers.

Properties offered to applicants on the Priority Register are according to risk and housing need, and chronologically for those on the High Needs and Standard registers. Multi-unit properties are not considered valid offers, and an applicant is provided the opportunity to inspect a property prior to making a decision.

Prior to any offer of a multi-unit property, information is sought from the Tenant Experience Team, to obtain information on the complex, any current issues to be aware of and to liaise about the suitability of each potential tenant.

Due to the nature of some of the multi-unit complexes, care is taken to ensure that offers are as considered and suitable as possible. The overriding consideration is to provide accommodation that meets an applicant's immediate need for housing.

This link provides additional information on how Housing ACT make property offers to applicants on the waitlist. [Allocations policy - Open Government Information](#)

- b. Consideration is given to a range of factors when offering multi-unit properties to applicants, including household composition and suitability for a multi-unit complex environment. Other factors include current housing situation, medical or mental health issues, needs of children. Multi-unit properties are not suitable for all applicants on the Housing ACT waitlist due to particular property attributes such as their location, condition, size and a range of other complexities.

Individuals interested in multi-unit properties must have an approved application with Housing ACT. If a support service is advocating for an applicant to be considered for a multi-unit property, Housing ACT will carefully consider the application and the recommendation. If the property is assessed to not be a suitable option for the applicant, Housing ACT will not make the offer.

Information regarding a potential tenant is obtained from the applicant's file which is provided through the assessment process. Housing ACT utilises this and information from support services to determine suitability for these properties.

4. There are 34 multi-unit properties with Fire Indicator Panels (FIPs). These FIPs were installed at the time of construction and met the relevant building codes and compliance requirements in place at that time.

OFFICIAL

5. Back to base fire alarms are not a standard item in Public Housing properties. Housing ACT educates tenants at the point of sign up to a public housing tenancy by providing the ACT Government Fire Safety in your Home booklet designed for public housing tenants and the *ACT Emergency Services Agency Home Fire Safety Checklist*.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:



Date:

27/11/25

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