



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–2025

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Mr Mark Parton MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs

In relation to: Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs and CPSU campaign against Housing ACT job cuts

Hearing: 21 November 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 25-26

Transcript provided: 2 December 2025

Answer Due: 9 December 2025

MR PARTON: Yes. Thank you, Chair. Minister, the position you stated about jobs and public service cuts does not line up with the feedback that I am getting from on the ground. I understand that we are putting questions to you today as the Treasurer. I received communication during the week from two staff members of Housing ACT, and they informed me that they had been communicated to in recent days about, quote, “The dire budgetary situation.” Which had led to a tightening of staffing in Housing ACT. Now, these staff have shared with me that pretty much all external contractors had been let go earlier in the year. I was then told that all government contractors would be let go as of December. I now understand that that is potentially been pushed out to June next year, but that is the feedback that they gave me. From your Treasury position, are you, despite the statements that you have made, about to preside over deep cuts to the public service?

Mr Steel: No, and we have been clear that the public service will continue to grow and the expenditure on employee expenses will continue to grow, it just will not grow at the same rate. And that was the savings measure that we took in the budget, and each agency will respond to that. There are unique circumstances in every agency, and I would not want to comment on Housing ACT. That is probably a matter to raise with the Minister for Homes and New Suburbs.

MR PARTON: I am sure she will look forward to it. Tell me though, why has the CPSU, this week, physically posted posters in various locations around Canberra with a heading, “Job and HDA Cuts in Housing.” The poster has details of online meetings for a few workers to talk to them about these cuts and how to fight them. If you are not slashing the public service, why is the CPSU advising its members on how to fight against you slashing the public service?

Mr Steel: Well, I do not agree, but you can put those questions to the responsible minister.

MR PARTON: All right. So you are just not going to answer them?

Mr Steel: Well, I am happy to—if you want me to take it on notice and provide it to the responsible minister to answer, but I do not make a habit of speaking outside of my—

MR PARTON: It is a fairly broad question. It is a fairly broad question. You have said—

Mr Steel: Well, it is a very specific question about a specific agency that is not in my portfolio of responsibilities directly. So I am happy to take that on notice, and we can come back to you via the responsible minister.

MR PARTON: Because it appears as though the union believes that you are slashing the public service.

Mr Steel: I have taken it on notice.

THE CHAIR: Are you happy to take it on notice and come back?

Mr Steel: Thank you.

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

All ACT Government directorates and agencies are required to manage within their allocated budget.

Housing ACT has made some decisions regarding labour hire contracts and non-ongoing ACT Government contracts within the Client Services Branch (CSB) to assist it in delivering services within its allocated budget.

During the week of 17 November, CSB of Housing Assistance provided information and confirmation for 13 labour hire contractors and 7 individuals with ACT Government non-going contracts that no extensions or additional engagements would be considered at this time, therefore providing as much notification and time as possible for them to pursue alternative employment engagements.

Housing Assistance committed to seeing through all contracted periods, with no intention to cut short any existing contract arrangements.

There has been no changes to permanent ACT Government employee's employment arrangements.

The senior leadership team are consulting further with the CSB workforce in relation to these impacts to ensure work health and safety risks, particularly psychosocial risks, are being appropriately managed and mitigated.

Staff safety and wellbeing is the priority of Housing Assistance and consultation on the ongoing risks, including the psychosocial risk of the workload on staff, will be a focus.

Potential impacts to the delivery of services to the Canberra community are also being considered and carefully monitored. Housing ACT's essential services to vulnerable members of the Canberra community will continue to be a focus and priority.

The direct actions of the CPSU is a matter for them, however Housing ACT continues to work constructively with the CPSU as they continue to support and advocate for their members.

OFFICIAL

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

Signature:

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large loop followed by a series of smaller loops and a final horizontal stroke.

Date:

19/12/25

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