



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

QToN No. 03

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMY AND GENDER AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY  
Ms Leanne Castley MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr Johnathan Davis  
MLA

**Inquiry into Housing and Rental Affordability**

**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**16 September 2022**

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Asked by Mr Johnathan Davis MLA on 16 September 2022: Dr Emma Campbell took on notice the following questions:

[Ref: UPT 16 September 2022, p 32)

In relation to: Public housing turnover time.

**MR DAVIS:** *What more do you think the ACT government should be doing to make sure that its 11,000-plus properties are available for rent?*

**Dr Campbell:** *I mean, I think they would be well placed to take some advice from our friends in the community housing sector, when you do a comparison of the turnover—the time it takes to turnover public housing dwellings, compared to how quickly our community housing providers turn them over. The gap is extraordinary—*

**MR DAVIS:** *And by turnover, do you just mean, just to clarify, is that the period in which—*

**Dr Campbell:** *Yes.*

**MR DAVIS:** *—sort of the property is being renovated—*

**Dr Campbell:** *Yes, that is right—*

**MR DAVIS:** *Okay.*

**Dr Campbell:** *—or empty before it is given to another tenant.*

**Dr Emma Campbell:** The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

It is the view of ACTCOSS that the current time taken by the ACT Government to re-let vacant dwellings is too long not least when compared with turnover times for community housing dwellings.

While there may be some good reasons for lengthy turnover periods, for example the need to keep properties empty for the purposes of providing emergency accommodation or due to the growing and renewing program, other causes are because of poor management and inefficiencies.

A media article in the Canberra Times from 2021 based on a Freedom of Information request reported that “more than 30 ACT Government-owned units in Kaleen sat empty for 15 months despite worsening housing affordability in Canberra because officials sought a better rental revenue deal”.

The article also stated that Housing ACT originally blamed COVID-19 and bushfires for the delay when, in fact, the houses were left empty because of ACT Government delays in determining a model for a community housing provider to manage the units.

[Media release: Minister must respond to report of housing delay | ACT Council of Social Service Inc. \(actcoss.org.au\)](#)

A more thorough and consistent schedule for maintaining public housing dwellings should be implemented by the ACT government so that properties do not require significant repairs between tenancies – and to ensure that Housing ACT properties are safe, secure and dignified homes for their tenants.

As stated in ACTCOSS’s original submission, in 2021 more than a quarter of public housing dwellings had at least two major structural faults. We welcome the government’s budgetary commitment of more than \$100 million for housing maintenance. This should also help to shorten turnover periods.

Housing ACT would benefit by engaging with community housing providers who have much shorter turnover periods between tenants.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality

Signature: 

Date: 29/09/22

By the Chief Executive Officer, ACT Council of Social Service