

MINISTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION — PORTFOLIOS —
GOVERNMENT REGIONAL OFFICERS' HOUSING

2297. Hon Martin Aldridge to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services:

I refer to Government Regional Officer Housing that is allocated to your departments and I ask with respect to each department under your control:

- (a) how many properties are allocated to each department;
- (b) if these properties are provided from an individual or organisation other than the Department of Communities (Housing) please identify the source;
- (c) please provide a breakdown of housing by departmental region;
- (d) please identify the number of properties per region where officers or staff are required to pay rent and those which receive their accommodation rent free;
- (e) with respect to officers and staff who pay rent please identify the variance between the rent paid by the officer or staff member and the cost paid by the department to provide the property in total by region;
- (f) is the cost charged to the department a charge based on market value, and who determines market value; and
- (g) if yes to (f), how frequently is a review of the applicable market value undertaken?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

This answer covers multiple Ministers' portfolios, including Disability Services, Seniors and Ageing, Volunteering, Housing, Veterans Issues, Youth, as well as my Child Protection, Women's Interests, Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence and Community Services portfolios.

The Department of Communities includes the former agencies of Child Protection and Family Support, the Housing Authority, Disability Services Commission and components of the former Local Government and Communities.

The data referred to below is accurate as at 15 July 2019.

- (a) The Department of Communities is the agency responsible for the Government Regional Officers' Housing (GROH) program. Under the program, the Department of Communities owns or leases 4,503 properties which are allocated to State Government agencies to meet accommodation requirements of public sector employees across regional Western Australia.

There are 321 GROH properties allocated to the Department of Communities for use as staff accommodation.

- (b) Of the 321 properties allocated to the Department of Communities, 132 are leased from the private rental market.
- (c) The number of properties allocated to each Department of Communities' region is as follows:

Region	Number of properties
East Kimberley	70
Goldfields	37
Great Southern	5
Mid West	20
Pilbara	95
South West	1
West Kimberley	79
Wheatbelt	14
Total	321

- (d) The breakdown of properties where the Department of Communities charges rent to its employees living in GROH accommodation or provides rent-free accommodation is as follows:

Region	Number of properties – rent paid by staff	Number of properties – rent-free accommodation
East Kimberley	46	21
Goldfields	26	9

Great Southern	3	1
Mid West	14	4
Pilbara	70	10
South West	1	0
West Kimberley	60	10
Wheatbelt	10	3
Total	230	58

Of the 321 properties allocated to the Department of Communities, 33 are vacant.

- (e) Under the GROH program, the Department of Communities charges rent to government agencies for the lease of an allocated GROH property. Where the Department of Communities allocates a property for the use of its own employees in regional locations, the GROH program will charge rent to the Department.

Region	Agency rent (\$)	Tenant rent (\$)	Variance (\$)
East Kimberley	50,177	8,063	42,115
Goldfields	19,985	6,352	13,633
Great Southern	850	480	370
Mid West	11,398	2,713	8,685
Pilbara	67,674	16,296	51,379
South West	350	262	89
West Kimberley	49,892	14,763	35,129
Wheatbelt	5,714	2,412	3,303
Total	206,040	51,339	154,701

- (f) The rent charged by the Department of Communities to government agencies for the use of a GROH property is calculated in accordance with the GROH Client Agency Rent Policy. Under the policy, the rent is determined according the following conditions:

if the property is owned by the Department of Communities and is located in an area with a functional housing market, a market rent is charged to the government agency. The market rent is determined by an independent valuer,

if the property is owned by the Department of Communities but is located in an area without a functional housing market, the rent is calculated according to the capital cost of the property recovered over a 25-year period (known as a cost rent), or

if the property is leased from the private rental market, the lease amount agreed with the private landlord is passed in full to the government agency.

- (g) In accordance with the GROH Client Agency Rent Policy, the rents charged to government agencies, including the Department of Communities, are reviewed on an annual basis. Market rents for GROH properties owned by the Department of Communities are determined annually by an independent valuer.