

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING — SOUTH HEDLAND OFFICE

374. Hon HELEN BULLOCK to the minister representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the front-page report of the *North West Telegraph* of 13 June 2012.

- (1) Can the minister confirm the allegations in the report, including —
 - (a) that staff had been attacked by dogs, abused and/or attacked by tenants and made to enter volatile premises without any backup;
 - (b) that housing officers are ignoring maintenance because of the scarcity of key staff;
 - (c) that the delayed maintenance has led to collapsed bathrooms and kitchens being left unrepaired, and that unattended plumbing works and leaks have left some tenants with water bills in excess of \$15 000; and
 - (d) that many temporary staff who report for duty in South Hedland have refused to stay after only one day due to the appalling circumstances in the tenancies?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that the third housing inspector position in the South Hedland office has been left unfilled for six months, resulting in the reported problems?
- (3) Will the minister undertake to provide immediate and appropriate increases to staffing levels at the South Hedland office to assist the overworked officers?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. The Department of Housing advises —

- (1)
 - (a) Since 1 July 2011 in the Pilbara region there have been two incidents of dog bites—on 22 February 2012 and 4 April 2012. There have been no incident reports of attacks by tenants. Staff are not made to enter volatile premises without any backup.
 - (b) Maintenance work in the region has not been placed on hold or neglected due to short staffing.
 - (c) The department has not been advised of collapsed kitchens and bathrooms or unattended plumbing works.
 - (d) No.
- (2) No FTE position has been left vacant or unfilled for a period of six months or more.
- (3) Current FTE levels are deemed by the department to be adequate to service the region.