

HOUSING AUTHORITY — PROPERTY SAFETY DEVICES

403. Hon SUE ELLERY to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the Auditor General's report released today that details a litany of failures associated with the fitting and maintenance of safety devices in the Housing Authority's 36 000 public housing properties.

- (1) Does the minister accept responsibility for what the Auditor General says are the agency's systemic weaknesses in property inspections, collection of data and management oversight?
- (2) Does the minister accept responsibility for the Housing Authority's continuing inability to manage this program?
- (3) What assurances can the minister give his tenants today that their health and safety, and that of their children, can be guaranteed following the admitted failure of this program?

Hon COL HOLT replied:

(1)–(3) I thank the member for the question. I am as disappointed as anybody about what that report has revealed. It is a pretty forthright report that clearly indicates some issues with how the Housing Authority has managed information around residual-current devices and safety devices. The Housing Authority probably has not done enough in the five or nearly six years after the issue was first brought to its attention. There are many, many reasons for that, but I think it has some work to do. It needs to work towards meeting those recommendations, which I accept—and the Housing Authority accepts that it needs to meet all those recommendations. I think there are some issues around the fact that every house under the Housing Authority's portfolio has an electronic safety device and fire alarms. The challenge for it is to determine whether it knows they are in working order. My comment to any tenant in public housing is that if they are in any doubt, they need to contact the Housing Authority immediately so those matters can be addressed.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Have you tried ringing the phone line?

Hon COL HOLT: I do not know, but if there is an issue with that, it needs to fix that as well. I raise that concern too and tenants should be proactive in raising issues with the Housing Authority.