

PUBLIC HOUSING — VACANT PROPERTIES — BENTLEY

1027. Hon KATE DOUST to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the recent article in the *Southern Gazette* titled “Bentley towers over empty statistics” and the statement by the Minister for Housing that he was not concerned about the number of empty dwellings in Bentley.

- (1) Given that we have more than 20 000 applicants waiting to be housed, should it not be the primary concern of the minister to ensure that every government-owned home has somebody in need living in it?
- (2) If yes to (1), how can the minister justify his statement in the *Southern Gazette*?

Hon COL HOLT replied:

I thank the honourable member for the question.

- (1)–(2) As the member would know, housing is a very big portfolio that has more than 44 000 properties across the state. Some houses are empty from time to time when refurbishments or maintenance are going on and, obviously, some in the Bentley towers have been empty. My expectation is that they will be repaired or refurbished as quickly as possible so that we can continue to house the people we house, who are the most needy in our community. Meeting the needs of those people is a complex matter that we have to deal with every day in Housing. Sometimes they are empty for longer than I would like, but that is how it is managed across the state.