

GOVERNMENT REGIONAL OFFICERS' HOUSING — VACANCIES

1787. Hon Steve Martin to the minister representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the Government Regional Officer Program (GROH), and I ask:

- (a) will the Minister please provide the total number of GROH houses, by region, for the following years as of 30 June:
 - (i) 2017;
 - (ii) 2018;
 - (iii) 2019;
 - (iv) 2020;
 - (v) 2021;
 - (vi) 2022; and
 - (vii) 2023;
- (b) for each date listed in (a), what was the total number of vacant houses;
- (c) for each vacant houses total in (b), how many houses had been vacant for six months or more;
- (d) as of today, how many houses are allocated to each client agency across the State; and
- (e) how many houses in (d) are currently vacant, per client agency, across the State?

Hon Jackie Jarvis replied:

- (a)–(c) Data collection changes for Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) properties occurred in 2017 and in 2021 and it should be noted that data from 2018 onward is not directly comparable to years previous.

The utilisation of GROH properties allocated to client agencies is determined by the client agency, not the Department of Communities.

Vacancy data is always point in time data. Over an average 12-month period, up to one third of all GROH portfolio tenancies may turnover due to normal rotation of staff in regional locations, agencies rotating staff on fixed tenure arrangements and staff leave, for example maternity leave for regional teachers or police. When the properties are vacated they undergo varying degrees of maintenance or refurbishment works before the next tenant moves into the property.

The Department of Communities (Communities) assesses all vacant properties and where appropriate, properties that are not aligned with GROH use, for example in remote locations with low demand, may be considered to be made available for clients on the public housing wait list.

This is in contrast to the former Liberal–National Government, who introduced an aggressive sales program of GROH properties in 2015 to cover a \$180 million debt they had accrued in the program. Due to this mismanagement by the former Liberal–National Government, over 600 homes were sold in the preceding years to cover this significant debt.

The table below provides the number of GROH properties, as well as allocated vacant and unallocated vacant, as at 30 June for each year between 2017 to 2023. Data collection changes for Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) properties occurred in 2017 and in 2021, and it should be noted that data from 2018 onward is not directly comparable to years previous.

	30 June 2017	30 June 2018	30 June 2019	30 June 2020	30 June 2021	30 June 2022	30 June 2023
Total GROH Properties	5,228	5,024	4,907	4,812	4,910	5,023	5,147
Total Allocated Vacant GROH Properties	421	379	393	442	432	498	523
Total Unallocated Vacant Properties	380	338	300	227	208	134	131

(d)–(e) As at 30 November 2023, there were a total of 5,207 Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) properties across Western Australia, 4,989 of which are allocated to client agencies across regional Western Australia.

Of the 4,989 GROH properties allocated to client agencies, 534 were vacant as at 30 November 2023. These properties may be vacant awaiting reallocation, undergoing refurbishment, used to house rotating staff on fixed tenure arrangements and to enable staff leave, or being considered for redevelopment.

The utilisation of GROH properties allocated to client agencies is determined by the client agency not the Department of Communities.
