

PUBLIC HOUSING — WAITING LIST

1312. Hon Dr Brad Pettitt to the minister representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to question on notice 1086, and I ask:

- (a) what are the current preference housing zones;
- (b) could the Minister please provide a table with the current preference housing zones showing the list date of the next applicant in line to be offered a home from the department, by preferred living area and property type and broken down by region:
 - (i) if no to (b), why not;
- (c) what are the average wait times for the current preference housing zones;
- (d) how many applications for housing have been waiting longer than the average wait times;
- (e) how many individuals do the applications in (d) represent;
- (f) how many individual children are included in the applications in (d);
- (g) how many individual Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people are included in the applications in (d);
- (h) how many individual Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children are included in the applications in (d); and
- (i) what is the longest time a current applicant has been waiting for housing?

Hon Jackie Jarvis replied:

- (a) North Metropolitan Region, South Metropolitan Region, East Metropolitan Region, Great Southern Region, South West Region, Goldfields, Midwest/Gascoyne, Pilbara, Karratha, West Kimberley, Wheatbelt, East Kimberley
- (b) The wait time of an applicant is only one of many factors that are considered when identifying the most suitable applicant for the next available dwelling. Only at the point in time of the allocation decision is it possible to accurately provide the wait time of the next applicant. Other factors include, but not limited to:

Whether the applicant is on the general or priority waitlist;

Whether the applicant has agreed to be housed in community housing as well as public housing;

Considerations regarding specific locations, for example, if an applicant needs to be close to hospital to easily access treatment on a frequent basis;

Whether an applicant needs to be in a ground floor apartment due to mobility issues; or

Whether an applicant needs access to a yard due to considerations associated with a service animal.

- (c)–(f) It should be noted that most applicants have a roof over their head or are housed while they wait for public housing to become available.

Factors that may contribute to longer wait times for individual applicants include circumstances where:

they have sourced appropriate accommodation yet remain eligible for public housing;

they have declined offered properties (which can occur multiple times);

they require specific housing features;

the type of accommodation they require is limited in their preference zone;

they spend periods of time incarcerated;

they have advised of changes in preference zone, family composition and housing need; or

there are specific medical considerations, a requirement to be in close proximity to support networks and cultural sensitivities.

Applicants with higher than average wait times are generally outliers that have access to housing while remaining eligible for public housing. This smaller number represents individual applicants that have unique and complex housing requirements, which may skew the average wait turn numbers, especially in regional areas where there is a lower turnover of properties.

Median wait turn times are included in the table to provide a more accurate reflection of wait times.

Public Housing Wait Times by Housing Zones 28 February 2023

Region	Average in Weeks	Median in Weeks
North Metro	131	97
South Metro	140	111
East Metro	111	92
Great Southern	117	77
Southwest	131	95
Goldfields	110	93
Midwest/Gascoyne	128	102
Pilbara	125	118
West Kimberley	220	173
East Kimberley	136	129
Wheatbelt	89	79

Average wait time is based on the 12 months of occupations up to and including 28 February 2023.

As at 28 February 2023, a total of 5,645 public housing applicants have been waiting longer than the average waiting time for their nominated Preference Zone representing 10,037 people. This includes 1,496 applicants where at least one child is listed on the application.

- (g)–(h) Applicants are not required to disclose their ethnicity, including whether they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, when applying for public housing in WA. It is also voluntary for applicants to identify whether children included on the application form identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Given the voluntary nature of disclosing ethnicity for both tenants and children when applying for public housing and that applicants with higher than average wait times are generally a smaller number with unique and complex housing requirements the Department of Communities cannot provide complete data.

- (i) As at 28 February 2023, the earliest applicant on the public housing wait list, who has complex medical needs, has been offered seven different social housing properties which were all declined. However, during this applicant's time on the waitlist the applicant has lived in suitable accommodation arrangements

This person has recently sought to remove themselves from the waitlist due to a change in income eligibility.

This person was registered in June 2004.