

PUBLIC HOUSING — WAITLIST — PORT HEDLAND AND SOUTH HEDLAND

1765. Hon Neil Thomson to the minister representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to my question on 2 Dec 2021, relating to homelessness and accommodation in Port Hedland and South Hedland where the response given indicated that a total of 343 applicants were on the housing waiting list and the Department of Housing managed 668 public housing properties, and I ask:

- (a) how many applicants for the Port Hedland and South Hedland preference zone are currently on the housing waitlist;
- (b) separately how many dwellings are now managed by the Department of Communities for the purpose of social housing in Port Hedland and South Hedland in the following:
 - (i) one bedroom;
 - (ii) two bedroom;
 - (iii) three bedroom; and
 - (iv) four bedroom;
- (c) how many of these are currently vacant;
- (d) of the vacant dwellings, how many are considered unfit for habitation in their current state; and
- (e) of the record \$875 million investment into social housing, how much was invested into new public housing stock in Port and South Hedland after 31 October 2021?

Hon Jackie Jarvis replied:

- (a) The Department of Communities (Communities) provides multiple pathways, including public rental housing, bond assistance loans, and other supports, to those unable to obtain housing through the private sector. It should be noted that the majority of applicants for public housing have access to some form of accommodation whilst on the waiting list.

Rental vacancy rates have tightened across the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly impacting the housing market. A tight private rental market will reflect an increase in the number of applications for social housing. Many people who may be otherwise housed, may seek the safety net of public housing when there is significant pressure in the private rental market.

As at 31 October 2023, the public housing waitlist has fallen to 338 applications for the Port and South Hedland preference zones since the 2021 response the Member refers.

- (b) As at 31 October 2023, there was an increase in the total public housing stock to 733 public housing properties since the 2021 response the Member refers.

| Public Housing Stock in Port and South Hedland as at 31 October 2023 | |
|---|--------------|
| Dwelling Type | Total |
| Singles – 1 | 56 |
| Singles – 2 | 5 |
| Seniors – 1 | 39 |
| Seniors – 2 | 1 |
| Family – 2 | 193 |
| Family – 3 | 376 |
| Family – 4 | 58 |
| Family – 5 | 4 |
| Family – 6+ | 1 |
| Total | 733 |

- (c)–(d) Vacancy numbers are always a single point in time number that may fluctuate for a range of reasons including maintenance, refurbishments, and major redevelopment, or waiting for relet. Returning properties may also be awaiting acceptance of offers from applicants, undergoing minor maintenance repairs or refurbishment prior to new occupants moving in, or undergoing major refurbishment, or a redevelopment.

As at 31 October 2023, there was 74 public housing properties vacant in Port and South Hedland. Of these, 62 properties were undergoing maintenance and will be re-tenanted, with a further 12 undergoing assessment for their future use. A significant number of those will already be tenanted.

- (e) From 1 July 2021 to 31 October 2023, 100 Social Housing dwellings have been contracted in the Pilbara region. Of these, 84 have been completed. Additionally, from 1 July 2021 to 31 October 2023, 757 dwellings have undergone maintenance or refurbishment works in the Pilbara region, ensuring these properties stay in the system for years to come.