



Hon John Carey MLA
Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness; Local Government

Our Ref: 78-06107

Hon Peter Foster MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Email: env@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear Chair

Petition No. 042 – Department of Communities' housing in Karawara

I refer to the above petition and provide the below information in response.

Following representations from Ms Debra Moran and the Karawara Community Group, Policy Advisers from my office met with Ms Moran to discuss her concerns.

Public Housing in Karawara

My priority, and that of the Government, is to see as many Western Australians as possible in safe, secure and sustainable homes. The McGowan Government has always taken pride in being committed to assisting our state's most vulnerable and is investing record amounts to assist Western Australians in line with this commitment.

The State Government is investing \$2.1 billion into social housing over the next four years, which includes the record investment of \$875 million announced as part of the 2021-22 State Budget. This is the single largest, one-off investment into social housing in the State's history and will provide an immediate boost to social housing.

Western Australia is currently experiencing significant demand for housing across the State. Public housing demand from low to moderate households is no exception. I am acutely aware of this and am mindful that in the current environment, properties are not unnecessarily demolished or sold at such a time of need.

Disruptive Behaviour in public housing

The Department of Communities is committed to taking a firm approach towards tenancies where there is serious or ongoing disruptive behaviour. Action is applied through both the Disruptive Behaviour Management Strategy and the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987* (RTA).

As the landlord, the Department of Communities must thoroughly investigate all complaints to determine whether a tenant has breached their tenancy agreement before any formal action can be taken against the tenancy. While it is acknowledged that this process may be cumbersome, it ensures the appropriate evidence is gathered should the matter proceed to court, and that the tenant is afforded procedural fairness to respond to the allegations against them.

The Department of Communities works closely with tenants and external support agencies to identify any underlying issues affecting a tenancy. Where issues are identified, a program is developed to effectively manage these issues to support tenants to sustain their tenancy, where possible. Action to terminate a tenancy is considered a measure of last resort and will only be taken in cases where all other efforts to sustain the tenancy have failed.

The decision to terminate a tenancy agreement sits with the Magistrate, who will only grant an order for vacant possession if satisfied that there has been a breach of the tenancy agreement, and that the tenant has been given every opportunity to rectify the breach and has failed to do so.

The Department of Communities provides over 6,400 public housing properties in the East Metropolitan Region, which Karawara falls within. The majority of public housing tenants abide by their tenancy agreement with no complaints or concerns reported, maintaining successful tenancies and contribute positively to their communities.

Notwithstanding, a suite of practical measures to alleviate concerns of disruptive behaviour, particularly in Bunderra Close, have been considered by the Department of Communities. Recently this has included a temporary CCTV camera being installed to manage disruptive behaviour and vandalism at properties.

Yours sincerely



HON JOHN CAREY MLA
MINISTER FOR HOUSING; HOMELESSNESS

16 MAY 2022