

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr. Higgins to the Minister for Housing and Community Development:

Access to housing in Wadeye

1. How many houses does the Department of Housing and Community Development own or administer across the Territory?

Table 1: Total Assets as at 31 December 2018

Tenure	Total Assets
Urban Public Housing*	4975
Remote Public Housing^	5139
Government Employee Housing**	1849
Industry Housing	576
Affordable Rental Housing^^	340
Community Housing	62
Emergency Housing (Galiwinku)	42
	12 983

* includes 179 Social Head Leased dwellings.

^ includes 385 Town Camp or Community Living Area dwellings.

** Includes 464 Private Head Leased Government Employee dwellings.

^^ includes 328 Private Head Lease Affordable Rental Housing dwellings.

2. As at 20 December 2018, how many of the houses that the Department owns or has access to are vacant or unoccupied?

About six per cent (296) of urban public housing dwellings were unoccupied

- 71 were awaiting assessment;
- 100 were undergoing maintenance;
- 10 were undergoing major upgrades;
- 41 were awaiting disposal or reinvestment decisions; and
- 74 were available for allocation.

About eight per cent (415) of remote public housing dwellings were unoccupied 159 were awaiting assessment;

- 19 were undergoing maintenance;
- 4 were undergoing major upgrades;
- 104 are awaiting disposal or reinvestment decisions; and
- 129 were available for allocation.

It is important to note that while some dwellings appear vacant, they have been either allocated or are in various stages of assessment or repair. Vacant housing numbers are also dynamic. As properties return to stock, others become vacant.

3. What is the average vacancy rate for public housing units across Urban, Regional and Remote Areas? Please break down by area.

The answer to this question is incorporated within the answer to question two.

4. How many houses does the Department of Housing and Community Development possess in Wadeye? Please identify by lot number and purpose (e.g. staff housing, public housing)

There are 310 dwellings in Wadeye, comprising 30 Government Employee Housing dwellings; two Industry Housing dwellings and 278 remote public housing dwellings.

5. As at 20 December 2018, how many of these houses are vacant or unoccupied? Please identify assets by Lot number.

As at 31 December 2018, there were 33 unoccupied remote public housing dwellings in Wadeye. Of the 33 dwellings, 16 are available for allocation, seven are undergoing vacant upgrade works before returning the property to stock and 10 are currently receiving maintenance works to bring back into stock for allocation against the wait list. The lot numbers are as follows:

659, 238, 552,581, 294,316, 479, 549, 540, 358, 686, 553, 593, 783, 637, 260, 302, 389, 520, 617, 275, 254, 288, 421, 725, 714, 653, 677, 681, 434, 301, 668 and 246.

6. How many houses in the West Daly Council region are currently available to rent, lease, or purchase?

382 assets within this region, comprising 42 Government Employee Housing dwellings; two Industry Housing dwellings and 338 remote public housing dwellings.

Of these, the 42 Government Employee Housing dwellings are available to lease to Northern Territory Government agencies for use by staff residing and working in the community. There are 338 dwellings available to rent by remote community residents, while the remaining two dwellings are leased through the Industry Housing Assistance Scheme.

7. Can you confirm that private construction firm SH Build received a house in Peppimenarti for a peppercorn rent of \$1 per year? If true, why?

In June 2014, the then Chief Executive Officer of the former Department of Housing provided approval for the dwelling at Lot 64, Peppimenarti – deemed

to be assessed as Beyond Economic Repair, to be allocated to SH Build under the Industry Housing Assistance Scheme – at peppercorn rent while they held the Housing Maintenance and Tenancy Management contracts.

SH Build submitted a proposal to refurbish the dwelling at its own cost in order to utilise the dwelling as an office space for staff and visiting officer accommodation.

8. How many Department of Housing and Community Development staff houses in Wadeye are empty?

Lot 624 in Wadeye. The staff members reside in this dwelling for three weeks out of every month during routine visits to the community.

9. If a staff house is vacant, will the Department seek to provide the house to another tenant?

Regular audits on the utilisation of Government Employee Housing dwellings is undertaken.

10. Why has the Government not allocated housing to those on panel contracts or those doing work at Wadeye?

Panel contractors undertaking works within Wadeye have the means to source private accommodation and also have access to commercial accommodation within the community.

11. Whom other than employees, occupy Department houses at Wadeye?

Two non-government organisations occupy a dwelling in Wadeye under the Industry Housing Assistance Scheme.

12. How many Government houses at Wadeye are occupied by non-Government people, and for what time period?

There are two dwellings that are allocated to non-government organisations under the Industry Housing Assistance Scheme.