

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING — 19 BRATHWAITE ROAD, LOCKRIDGE

519. Mr D.J. KELLY to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the 16-unit Department of Housing complex in Brathwaite Road, Lockridge, that the minister has allowed to lay derelict for the past eight months, and to the evidence from residents that the site is now being used by squatters and drug dealers and that children have easy access to the site.

- (1) Why has the minister allowed this entirely predictable situation to develop, especially as I wrote to him about it in January this year?
- (2) Will the minister immediately ensure that the site is secured by putting in place 24-hour onsite security, along with secure fencing?
- (3) When will the complex be demolished so that residents no longer have to put up with this intolerable situation?

Mr W.R. MARMION replied:

I thank the member for Bassendean for the question.

- (1)–(3) I will provide some background on the apartments. On 6 November 2013 an explosion and fire occurred at the complex. A resident in unit 16, Darren Rackstraw, was seriously injured during the incident and required hospitalisation. He is recovering from injuries at the moment and the department remains in contact with his family. The complex is very old and beyond its useable life. The residents have all been moved out and are in accommodation at the moment, some of which is, admittedly, not totally suitable but we will make sure we get everyone back into suitable accommodation.

I will now go through the process of what has happened with the apartments. On 13 December 2013, a demolition application was sent to the City of Swan requesting its comments. On 31 January 2014, a letter was received from the City of Swan saying that it had no objection to the demolition. On 30 January, a letter was sent to the Western Australian Planning Commission requesting permission to demolish the complex in question on 19 Brathwaite Road. On 5 February, a letter was received from the WAPC stating that the application for demolition was invalid as it could not come from the Department of Housing but had to come from the City of Swan. On 5 February, an email was sent to the City of Swan requesting that it forward the application directly to WAPC as opposed to DOH. On 5 February, an email was received from the City of Swan saying that it would forward its comments directly to the WAPC. On 27 February, a letter was received from WAPC confirming that it had received a demolition application from the City of Swan and was processing it. On 7 April, approval for demolition was received from the WAPC. On 30 April, a tender for demolition was released. On 4 June, the tender for demolition closed. On 13 June, the tender was awarded to Vinsan Contracting, and 20 August is the deadline for the building to be demolished and the site cleared. This is what has been going on. The Department of Housing has been on the ball to get it done and the block will be demolished on 20 August or before.

In the meantime, we have contracted Wilson Security to monitor the site and conduct numerous visits every day during the day and night. This security company has instructions also to contact police if their attendance is required. It is an issue, but this project will end up being a very good development. It is part of our affordable housing development program to provide more houses as part of our strategic approach to delivering affordable houses to Western Australians.