

**HOUSING AUTHORITY — STATE HOUSING DENSITY**

*Grievance*

**MRS G.J. GODFREY (Belmont)** [9.43 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Housing. In March this year I presented a grievance about state housing to Hon Terry Redman as minister representing the Minister for Housing in the lower house. I requested a concrete redevelopment plan, with targets and timelines, to reduce the absolute number of public housing stock within the precincts of the Belmont electorate identified by the Housing Authority as state housing clusters that need de-concentration.

*Point of Order*

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** Madam Deputy Speaker, could you clarify what the situation is when the minister to whom the member is grieving is not here.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am advised that the grievance can go ahead without the minister. If the minister does not come to the house by the end of the member's grievance, it is recorded without a response.

*Grievance Resumed*

**Mrs G.J. GODFREY:** In his response, the minister advised that the Housing Authority is working on delivering urban renewal projects within the suburbs of Rivervale, Cloverdale, Belmont and Redcliffe through four different approaches. In Rivervale, it has opted for the rationalisation approach, which includes activities such as spot purchases, property refurbishments and selling current assets. In Cloverdale, the authority has chosen the redevelopment approach, which includes the demolition and/or redevelopment of assets for the retention of public housing, shared equity sales and/or full market sales. In Belmont, the approach selected was renewal, which includes all the previously mentioned activities, coupled with the option of acquiring private properties to restructure the area. In Redcliffe, the authority opted for the revitalisation approach, which includes rezoning, road realignment and upgrading of the local amenities such as parks and streetscaping.

Particularly in relation to Rivervale, the minister said that the Housing Authority was aiming for a rationalisation target of 50 properties in the next five years and 100 to 120 properties in the long term. I thought this was encouraging information, despite not agreeing with the drawn-out time frame of five years and beyond. Not long after I presented that grievance, one of my constituents came to my office in April very concerned about the letter she had received from the Housing Authority. An excerpt from the letter states —

As you may be aware, the Housing Authority is reducing its number of public housing dwellings in your immediate area through its Social Housing Investment Package.

Your property has been identified as potentially suitable for this project, with the purpose of today's visit to assess whether it will remain as social housing in the future. If your property is selected for the project, it will no longer be used for social housing and the Housing Authority will offer you another property in a suitable location.

There are a number of available support options such as financial assistance, which will be discussed if you are required to move. If your property is found to be unsuitable for the project, there will be no change, and it will remain as social housing.

With state housing being a major issue for Belmont, the social housing investment package is very important and I would greatly appreciate information that I can use to inform constituents of its progress, especially with the rationalisation approach selected to de-concentrate state housing clusters in Rivervale.

**MR B.J. GRYLLS (Pilbara — Minister for Housing)** [9.48 am]: I thank the member for Belmont for the grievance and for her ongoing interest in this matter. She regularly speaks to me about this issue and I use her examples when I meet with the Department of Housing and the director general because her view is shared by many, and I understand the concern.

The appropriate mix of social and affordable housing across all communities is important and is a priority for this government. I point the member for Belmont to the success the Housing Authority achieved in the recently completed New North project. This project radically changed the face of Balga, Girrawheen, Koondoola and Westminster over a 20-year period. These projects require long-term, sustained commitment from state government, local government, the private sector and the community to fund and shape a future vision for the renewed communities. This is particularly the case in places such as Belmont, Bentley and Beaconsfield in the metropolitan area and Broome, Geraldton and Albany in regional Western Australia. Because we have had success in these renewal projects, members will hear us talking more about those programs in the coming months.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 15 September 2016]

p6114b-6116a

Mrs Glenys Godfrey; Ms Simone McGurk; Deputy Speaker; Mr Brendon Grylls

---

The New North project was predicated on a strong public housing presence of 25 to 35 per cent of all housing in the four suburbs. This enabled the Housing Authority to take a lead role in the approach and delivery of revitalising these suburbs.

The City of Belmont has around 8.4 per cent of households as public housing—an overall ratio of around one to 11. There are pockets of high public housing density and this is largely a legacy of the “housing commission suburbs” of past decades and their long-term residents who have raised families in the community. These areas of high density are in Rivervale, Cloverdale and Redcliffe. The Housing Authority has around 1 434 households in public housing across the City of Belmont, approximately 36 per cent of whom are seniors. We are committed to addressing the appropriate mix of public housing through continued urban renewal in Belmont. This is already well underway with the social housing investment program, stock redevelopment and affordable housing programs that the member has previously been briefed on by the department.

In May 2015, the government announced a \$560 million social housing investment package to halve the number of seniors and families with children on the priority waiting list by June 2017. From the \$560 million allocation, \$79 million worth of expenditure will be directed to urban renewal programs across the state to address areas of high public housing concentration such as those within the City of Belmont. Housing has also identified opportunities to purchase replacement public housing within the east metropolitan region to facilitate the relocation of tenants from Rivervale. This will allow up to 50 vacated properties to be sold over a three-year period, subject to housing market conditions and sales rates. Housing has progressed, and continues to progress, a range of initiatives aimed at reducing high concentrations of social housing in the City of Belmont.

In Rivervale, a total of 50 properties will be vacated, renovated and sold over a three-year period to March 2019 through the urban renewal program. To date, six properties have already been vacated and sold. Rivervale’s unique social mix has led to the establishment of a diverse network of specialised support services such as seniors support, Rivervale Primary School, Belmont Aboriginal Pre-School, the Salvation Army and the Rivervale Community Centre. Many of Housing’s tenants benefit from close proximity to these services. An urban renewal program in Rivervale has been initiated to address its high social housing presence, specifically around Wilson Park. I know that the member would like us to focus on that. In the first instance, Housing is targeting rationalisation of up to 50 properties in the next three years and between 100 to 120 properties in the longer term.

In Cloverdale and Rivervale, 16 underutilised public housing assets are currently being redeveloped and will return 37 new housing assets. Of the 37 dwellings, only six have been retained for public housing, 10 are being sold as shared equity affordable housing and 21 are being sold as full sale. The revenue from the sales will support the purchase of replacement public housing stock in other areas as we look to decrease the density of public housing.

In Redcliffe, the Housing Authority has been working closely with the City of Belmont on the strategic vision of the Forrestfield–Airport Link project. The final planning solution adopted by the city will dictate the options available to Housing for the redevelopment and de-concentration of its housing in Redcliffe. Housing will continue to address areas of high public housing concentration through urban renewal, progressive redevelopment and other associated housing programs. Housing’s aim is to work with local government, residents in the local community and industry to support and achieve economic and social prosperity. This includes an appropriate social mix.

I encourage all members of Parliament to bring their concerns to me as housing minister when areas of high public housing density are affecting the local community. We have legacy problems that we are trying to unwind. We know that we need to provide a safety net of public housing for the people in the community who need that but with that safety net comes the obligation of being good tenants, paying rent and looking after the property. Government policies in and around that are very important.

The member for Belmont continues to raise this issue. She has put pressure back onto the Housing Authority, which I welcome. That is the job of a member of Parliament. That pushes the Housing Authority to come up with the best possible solutions for her community. I thank the member for her grievance. I thank her for her willingness to call it like it is with regard to my agency. I give my commitment to her to work with her to make her electorate a great place to live. Public housing is an important safety net for the community but it needs to provide a positive outcome for the wider community. When legacy issues have led to it not being so positive, our urban renewal programs can hopefully begin to solve those problems.