

PUBLIC HOUSING — COLLIE

272. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the housing stock owned by the Department of Housing in Collie and the minister's answer to question on notice 142 in which he stated there were 18 vacant houses in the area.

- (1) Why is the department selling eight government-owned properties in Collie when 114 people have been waiting for more than 88 weeks for accommodation?
- (2) Why are 12 properties being either sold, demolished or disposed of, and only six units scheduled to be completed in 2013–14 to replace those 12 properties?

Mr W.R. MARMION replied:

I thank the member for Collie–Preston for the question.

- (1)–(2) There is a number of reasons the department sells houses and the situation in Collie is no exception. Sometimes a house is past its use-by date and it may cost too much to refurbish, so rather than refurbish it, the department will sell it. With the money the department gets from selling that house there is finance available to buy another one. It is a very efficient way of using capital. It also ensures that the house for sale remains on the market and becomes affordable housing for someone else. That is the general concept.

The houses that were sold in Collie will be replenished. There is a turnover and we try to ensure that our housing stock is of a certain age and can be easily maintained.

Mr M.P. Murray: But we're losing numbers, minister. The numbers are going down, not up.

Mr W.R. MARMION: I do not have the specific numbers for the member's electorate, but I am quite happy to provide them to him. It is normal practice for the Department of Housing to buy and sell houses. Another instance when we are keen to sell houses is when we have land that is double the value of the average house price and we can sometimes get two houses out of that process. Another reason we sell houses is that sometimes we can get rezoning, so one house can be turned into a duplex or a triplex. There are a lot of reasons we sell houses, and they are all for the benefit of working towards delivering our affordable housing strategy, which has been getting a lot of credit right across Australia as the best strategy in Australia.