

SOCIAL HOUSING — COMPLAINTS

827. Ms M. Beard to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) I refer to the provision of social housing in WA and the complaints process for community members to raise concerns about tenants and the condition of social housing stock and I ask:
  - (a) What are the processes available to raise concerns with the Department of Communities when community members have concerns about the behaviour of a social housing tenant or the condition of social housing stock; and
  - (b) How are the complaints received in (1) responded to by your department?
- (2) For each of the years below how many complaints did the Department of Communities receive regarding tenant behaviour or the condition of social housing stock:
  - (a) 2017–2018;
  - (b) 2018–2019;
  - (c) 2019–2020;
  - (d) 2020–2021;
  - (e) 2021–2022;
  - (f) 2022–2023;
  - (g) For each of the above years what was the median response time for a complaint;
  - (h) What was the longest time a person who raised a concern had to wait for a response; and
  - (i) How many complaints outlined in each of the above years were not responded to?
- (3) How many complaints were received by Department of Communities for each of the years outlined above for each of the below Local Government Areas again regarding tenant behaviour or the condition of social housing stock?:
  - (a) Geraldton;
  - (b) Carnarvon;
  - (c) Karratha;
  - (d) Port Headland;
  - (e) Mount Magnet;
  - (f) Meekatharra;
  - (g) Northampton;
  - (h) Shark Bay;
  - (i) Exmouth;
  - (j) For each of the above locations what was the median response time for a complaint;
  - (k) What was the longest a person who raised a concern had to wait for a response; and
  - (l) How many complaints outlined in each of the above locations were not responded to?

**Mr J.N. Carey replied:**

- (1) (a)–(b) The State Government is committed to supporting vulnerable Western Australians and is investing a record \$2.6 billion to deliver 4,000 social homes across the state. In line with this commitment, where tenants are experiencing issues with their tenancy, The Department of Communities (Communities) seeks to support tenants to sustain their tenancy. This includes making appropriate referrals to supports and programs such as Thrive, which provides support to public housing clients. Where a tenant is at risk of eviction, Communities will increase their contact with the client and link them with relevant support services to help address the issues impacting their tenancy and, in most cases, tenants remedy these issues.

Eviction is a last resort for Communities. Communities works with tenants to ensure they are given every opportunity to rectify the issues impacting on their tenancy. Since coming into Government, Communities has implemented a proactive approach, focusing on early intervention, and case management services to support tenants, which has seen the number of evictions from public

housing significantly decline since 2015–16 at 315 under the Liberal–National Government, to 47, in the last financial year.

Communities investigates all disruptive behaviour complaints in accordance with its obligations under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987* (RTA).

Concerns relating to tenancies can be raised with Communities via phone, online, in person, or by post.

Communities works to investigate complaints received against public housing tenancies in a consistent and timely manner in line with the RTA. It is important to note that Communities is not a law enforcement agency and does not have the power to investigate suspected illegal activities. This should be reported to the WA Police Force.

Complaints need to be substantiated with corroborating evidence to prove an ongoing or unreasonable nuisance or disruption has occurred.

- (2) (a)–(f) Multiple complaints may be received for a single incident, and by the same complainant. The below data represents all complaints received by Communities, not only corroborated complaints.

<b>Public Housing Statewide Complaints Received as at below reporting dates</b>		
<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Reporting Date</b>	<b>Complaints Received</b>
2015–2016	30 June 2016	12,761
2016–2017	30 June 2017	11,573
2017–2018	30 June 2018	12,272
2018–2019	30 June 2019	11,783
2019–2020	30 June 2020	12,482
2020–2021	30 June 2021	12,408
2021–2022	30 June 2022	12,223
2022–2023	30 June 2023	14,940

- (g)–(i) Data is not collected in this manner and given the level of agency resourcing required to provide this detailed information with a manual review of files, it is not considered to be a reasonable use of government resources.

- (3) (a)–(i) Multiple complaints may be received for a single incident, and by the same complainant. The below data represents all complaints received by Communities, not only corroborated complaints.

<b>Public Housing Statewide Complaints Received as at below reporting dates for the specified LGA's</b>		
<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>LGA</b>	<b>Complaints Received</b>
<b>2017–2018</b>	City Of Greater Geraldton	295
	Shire Of Carnarvon	147
	City Of Karratha	355
	Town Of Port Hedland	195
	Shire Of Mount Magnet	3
	Shire Of Meekatharra	7
	Shire Of Northampton	3
	Shire of Shark Bay	1
	Shire Of Exmouth	11
<b>2018–2019</b>	City Of Greater Geraldton	309
	Shire Of Carnarvon	159
	City Of Karratha	342

**Extract from Hansard**  
 [ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 8 August 2023]  
 p3476b-3479a  
 Ms Merome Beard; Mr John Carey

	Town Of Port Hedland	172
	Shire Of Mount Magnet	1
	Shire Of Meekatharra	8
	Shire Of Northampton	1
	Shire of Shark Bay	5
	Shire Of Exmouth	17
<b>2019–2020</b>	City Of Greater Geraldton	371
	Shire Of Carnarvon	131
	City Of Karratha	395
	Town Of Port Hedland	190
	Shire Of Mount Magnet	6
	Shire Of Meekatharra	2
	Shire Of Northampton	11
	Shire of Shark Bay	15
	Shire Of Exmouth	10
<b>2020–2021</b>	City Of Greater Geraldton	381
	Shire Of Carnarvon	159
	City Of Karratha	343
	Town Of Port Hedland	143
	Shire Of Mount Magnet	6
	Shire Of Meekatharra	19
	Shire Of Northampton	1
	Shire of Shark Bay	0
	Shire Of Exmouth	17
<b>2021–2022</b>	City Of Greater Geraldton	317
	Shire Of Carnarvon	106
	City Of Karratha	307
	Town Of Port Hedland	280
	Shire Of Mount Magnet	5
	Shire Of Meekatharra	6
	Shire Of Northampton	3
	Shire of Shark Bay	5
	Shire Of Exmouth	13
<b>2022–2023 YTD</b>	City Of Greater Geraldton	552
	Shire Of Carnarvon	181
	City Of Karratha	444
	Town Of Port Hedland	173
	Shire Of Mount Magnet	2
	Shire Of Meekatharra	7
	Shire Of Northampton	1

	Shire of Shark Bay	0
	Shire Of Exmouth	19

- (j)-(l) Data is not collected in this manner and given the level of agency resourcing required to provide this detailed information with a manual review of files, it is not considered to be a reasonable use of government resources.