

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 14

5 December 2025

Question No. 744

MS CHIAKA BARRY MLA: To ask the Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs

1. Can the Minister advise how many fires have occurred in public housing premises, including whether the fire originated in cooktops or stoves, for each of the last five financial years?
2. What was the cost remediation of damage following the fires referred to in part (1)?
3. Can the Minister advise how many automatic stove shut-off devices have been installed in public housing premises?
4. What would the cost be to install automatic stove shut-off devices in public housing properties?
5. Is there a systemic process to consider whether an automatic stove shut-off device should be installed in all or a particular residence?
6. Does Housing ACT advise residents that they can request that an automatic stove shut-off device be installed?
7. What is the process for a public housing resident to request that an automatic stove shut-off device be installed?
8. What is the decision-making process and criteria applied if a public housing resident requests that an automatic stove shut-off device be installed?
9. Is priority accorded to vulnerable communities making such requests as referred to in part (8)?

MS YVETTE BERRY MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. There are limitations in available data to provide 5-year history or identify the origin of each fire incident.

Since July 2024, 50 major fire incidents, requiring ACT Insurance Authority insurance claims, have occurred at Housing ACT premises that have impacted about 100 dwellings.

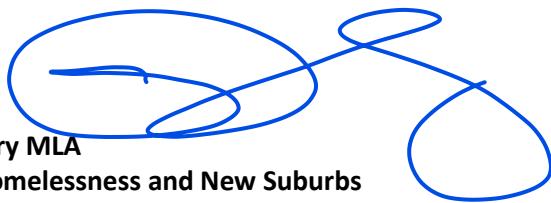
2. Of the 50 incidents, 18 (49 dwellings) have been fully resolved at a cost of about \$5 million.
3. Automatic stove shut-off devices are not a requirement under the Building Code of Australia, National Construction Code or AS/NZS 3000:2018 (applicable to electrical works). Housing ACT does not install these devices as part of upgrades or repairs and maintenance.

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While automatic shut-off devices are not installed, under the building code, isolation switches are required for cooking appliances with an open cooking surface, located near but not directly on the appliance (typically within 2m, outside a 150mm hazard zone), enabling quick power disconnection for maintenance or emergencies. Housing ACT ensures isolation switches are installed in compliance with these requirements.

4. As Housing ACT do not currently install automatic shut-off devices, the cost of these are not known.
5. There is no current process because these devices are not required under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, or any applicable building codes.
6. Refer to the response to question 5.
7. Refer to the response to question 5.
8. Refer to the response to question 5.
9. The installation of these devices may be considered as part of an application for accessibility modifications if recommended by a medical professional.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Yvette Berry MLA".

Yvette Berry MLA
Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs

Date: 20/12/25

This response required 10 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$215.74