

Yvette Berry MLA

Deputy Chief Minister
Minister for Education and Early Childhood
Minister for Homes and New Suburbs
Minister for Sport and Recreation

Member for Ginninderra

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Questions on Notice Paper No 4

Friday, 21 March 2025

Question No. 219

Mr. Cain MLA: To ask the Minister for Homes and New Suburbs

1. Can the Minister outline the exact process for lodging a housing application, from submission to approval.
2. What measures are in place to ensure applications are properly recorded and tracked.
3. How often are applications reviewed to ensure they have not been misplaced or overlooked.
4. Why are many applicants reporting that their applications have gone missing.
5. How does ACT Housing track applications to prevent applicants from needing to reapply multiple times.
6. What steps are being taken to improve record-keeping and reduce instances of lost applications.
7. How are applicants informed about the status of their application at each stage.
8. What is the expected timeframe for an applicant to receive confirmation that their application has been received and is being processed.
9. If an application is misplaced, what recourse do applicants have, and how is their case prioritised.
10. Has the directorate conducted any internal reviews to identify why applications are going missing.
11. Are there plans to introduce an online tracking system where applicants can monitor the progress of their application.
12. What improvements are being made to ensure greater accountability in the application process.

Yvette Berry MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. Applicants can use the Eligibility Checker which is publicly available on the Housing ACT website to provide an easy and accessible way of checking eligibility (age, residency, income/assets) for public housing in the ACT.

Applicants will be asked to verify their ID through the ACT Digital Account and then directed to the online application form for new and transfer applications.

Support is available in the Belconnen Housing shopfront to assist applicants without a device to apply online where possible. The application form is also available to applicants in hard copy format if required.

Once eligibility is confirmed, an applicant will step through the application for public housing, and will be asked a series of questions on who is in their household, the type of property they need, disability specific features and whether they are experiencing any risks to safety.

The responses to these questions will determine the level of risk and need for housing, and an outcome will be displayed for the applicant. The applicant can then choose to submit their application. Supporting documents will be requested to verify information provided.

Once the application is submitted, a Housing ACT staff member will contact the applicant to arrange an interview to further discuss the application and ensure all information has been captured.

If all information and supporting documents have been provided, an assessment will be finalised, the application will be formally approved and a waitlist category assigned. The applicant will be advised of the outcome of the application process.

2. All Housing ACT applications are uploaded to the internal business system, Homenet which provides records and tracking of applications.
3. Applications are reviewed as follows:
 - Standard- every 18 months
 - High Needs- every 12 months
 - Priority- every 3 months
 - When applicants provide new information about their application.
4. Without direct reference to an application being misplaced, Housing ACT cannot provide information about whether an application has gone missing or not and for what reason. Housing ACT recommends any concerns are referred to Housing.customerservice@act.gov.au

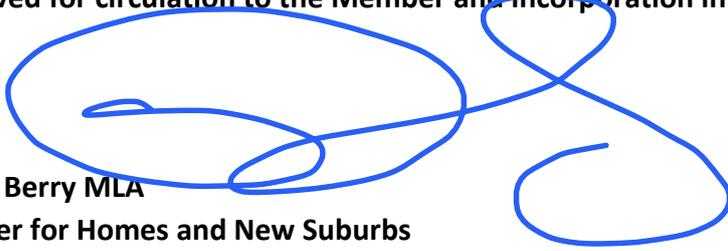
The online application process is the recommended pathway to apply for public housing in the ACT as, once lodged, the applications are stored digitally within its operational systems and are easily tracked throughout the system.

5. Housing ACT recommends applicants apply online. This provides tracking of the application and applicants can review their application at any time via their ACT Government Digital Account and provide any further or updated information as required, removing the need to reapply.
6. Housing ACT has implemented an online application form. This provides tracking of the application and applicants can at any time via their ACT Government Digital Account review their application and removing the risk of a lost application.
7. The Assessing Officer will make contact with the applicant after lodgement of an application to conduct an intake and assessment interview. If contact is successful, the Assessing Officer will advise the applicant of the stages of the assessment process and allocation of property.

If an Assessing Officer requires further information to assess the application, the applicant will be sent a 28-day letter by email if provided and post requesting the additional information. The Assessing Officer will also follow up on day 14 of this 28-day period as a reminder via a phone call. On the 28th day if there has been no response, the Assessing Officer will make an assessment on the status of the application based on the information provided and approve it to the appropriate waitlist. The Assessing Officer will communicate the outcome of this decision to the applicant in writing via post and email if provided, and where possible, attempt contact via a phone call to advise the applicant of the outcome.

8. Generally, a Housing ACT representative will attempt to make contact within 5 business days to confirm the application has been received and to discuss next steps.
9. If Housing ACT have a record of an application being received but do not have the physical application, contact will be made with the applicant to request a copy or new application. This application is then backdated to the original date of lodgement. If the circumstances are urgent, the application upon lodgement will be triaged and prioritised for assessment.
10. No.
11. This system in place for applications received online through the ACT Government Digital Account, allows applicants to apply for Housing Assistance along with the ability to track and update their application online. It also provides mechanisms to internally track applications for the business area.
12. The digital application process has been implemented to reduce or eliminate the instances of lost or misplaced applications.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and curves.

Yvette Berry MLA
Minister for Homes and New Suburbs

Date: 9/04/25

This response required 1 hour 20 minutes to complete, at an approximate cost of \$139.52.