

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 14

5 December 2025

Question No. 739

Ms Chiaka Barry MLA: To ask the Attorney-General –

1. How much interest was earned from the investment of the amount paid to the credit of the Rental Bond Account in the 2024–2025 financial year.
2. Can the Minister provide a breakdown of how interest earned on the Rental Bond Account was expended in the 2024–2025 financial year, as required under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (the Act), including how much was allocated to (a) the ACAT trust account, (b) lessor and tenant information programs, (c) dispute resolution services for residential tenancy disputes, (d) assistance programs to support the provision of residential accommodation, (e) research into rental-housing issues, (f) reimbursement of costs incurred by the Commissioner in tenancy proceedings, and (g) reimbursement to the Territory for administration of the Act.
3. How does the Government determine the allocation of interest income across the permitted categories under the Act referred to in part (2).
4. Is there a public framework, formula, or annual reporting obligation guiding the process referred to in part (3).
5. Will the Government commit to publishing an annual public report on the operation of the Rental Bond Account.

TARA CHEYNE MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The amount of interest earned from the investment of the amount paid to the Rental Bond Account in 2024-25 was \$5.448 million.
2. The ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) Trust receives interest income generated from the Rental Bonds Trust account. The ACAT Trust account receives funds from several sources, pursuant to s 115B of the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008 (ACAT Act). Interest earned on the Rental Bond Account is expended as part of the ACAT Trust and not accounted for separately.

The Tenants Advice Service (TAS), delivered by Legal Aid ACT, is funded by the ACAT Trust (\$0.539 million in 2024-25). The TAS provides free confidential legal assistance to ACT tenants and

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occupants to understand their legal rights and responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997. The TAS also offers community education for residential tenants and tenant advocates.

In 2024-25, \$0.768 million from the ACAT Trust was authorised to be reimbursed to JACS to administer the ACAT Trust and support a range of functions. Functions authorised under the ACAT Act include work undertaken by JACS on behalf of the ACAT in connection with functions conferred on ACAT under other legislation. For example, functions related to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*, including policy development and legislative reform in relation to tenancy law, maintaining the ACT Renting Book, and program management of the TAS. JACS receives reimbursement from the ACAT Trust for legal policy work undertaken behalf of ACAT, leading recruitment processes of all Tribunal appointments through to Cabinet, the administration of the *Agents Act 2003*, and various purposes in relation to the *Retirement Villages Act 2012*.

The ACT Revenue Office was reimbursed \$0.887 million in 2024-25 to administer the rental bond scheme.

In 2024-25, funds from the ACAT Trust (including interest income from Rental Bonds trust account) were also allocated to the following authorised purposes: the annual costs (\$10.068 million) of providing dispute resolution under all ACAT authorising laws, including the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* and the annual cost of Access Canberra providing regulatory services under the *Agents Act 2003* and regulatory services and support in relation to retirement villages (\$0.963 million).

3. The formal administration of the ACAT Trust is aligned with the timeframes and steps of the normal ACT Government Budget process.

The JACS Director-General is responsible for authorising the disbursement of funds from the ACAT Trust on an annual basis. All expenditure from the ACAT Trust is for a purpose authorised by statute or regulation, including the *ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008*, *ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2009* and other Territory legislation.

4. Interest income, money held in rental bond trusts, and ACAT Trust expenditure are disclosed in JACS' Financial Statements as part of the Directorate's annual report.
5. Public reporting on the operation of the Rental Bond account is not currently under consideration by the government.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.


Tara Cheyne MLA
Attorney-General

Date: 28/12/25

This response required 40 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$76.88.