

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

1. Why are urgent maintenance requests from public housing tenants frequently delayed, even when the repairs have been assessed and approved.
2. What measures are in place to ensure that once maintenance work is approved, it is actually completed within a reasonable timeframe.
3. How does the Government justify tenants being forced to continue paying full rent for properties that have severe maintenance issues making them unsafe or uninhabitable.
4. What is the Government doing to improve oversight of Housing ACT and Programmed FM to ensure tenants are not left waiting indefinitely for critical repairs.
5. What steps is the Government taking to ensure public housing properties are free from serious health hazards, such as mould infestations, structural damage, and unsafe plumbing.
6. How does the Government respond to reports of tenants living in homes with hazardous conditions, including exposed syringes, contaminated soil, or damaged infrastructure.
7. What is the process for prioritising repairs that pose a direct health and safety risk to tenants.
8. How does the Government hold Programmed FM accountable when essential repairs are continuously delayed or ignored.
9. Why do tenants often receive multiple assessments from Programmed FM or Housing ACT with no actual repairs being completed.
10. What changes will the Government make to ensure Housing ACT is more responsive and transparent in handling maintenance requests.
11. What is the Government's timeline for ensuring all outstanding urgent maintenance requests in public housing are addressed.
12. Will the Government commit to an independent review of Housing ACT's maintenance processes to prevent future delays and failures.



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

1. All repairs and maintenance requests that are raised, are actioned according to the type of repair, the life of the asset and the needs of the tenants in those homes. Requests that are categorised as responsive (urgent) works, are completed in the following timeframe:
  - I. Urgent 4 hour – Urgent repairs and maintenance work presenting as an immediate risk to health, safety or security, to be completed within 4 hours;
  - II. Priority Next Day – Urgent repairs and maintenance work, which is likely to develop into a health, safety or security risk if not repaired, to be completed by 6:00pm the following day;
  - III. Day 5 – Urgent repairs and maintenance work, to be completed within 5 calendar days; and
  - IV. Day 20 – Works that are not critical or urgent and do not impact on the liveability of the home, to be completed within 20 calendar days.

Should tenants have a maintenance request to raise, they are able to do so themselves or with the support of their Housing ACT Housing Manager. All maintenance requests raised, will be actioned according to the type of repair, complexity of works and needs of individual tenants.

2. Responsive works are actioned according to the timeframes referenced above. Works that are not considered responsive, such as planned and capital works, are assessed and given a timeframe for completion that aligns with the tenant's needs and the liveability of the asset.

Under the Total Facilities Management Agreement, Programmed Facility Management (PFM) ensure that all repairs and maintenance work is completed within the assessed timeframe and to the required standard. Both Housing ACT and PFM have customer service teams in place to support tenants with any questions they may have regarding timelines for completion or their maintenance work.

As mentioned above, tenants are able to raise maintenance requests directly with PFM; they are also provided with support of their Housing ACT Housing Manager's to do the same. All maintenance requests raised, will be actioned according to the type of repair, complexity of works and needs of individual tenants.

3. Tenants are not forced to pay rent. If a property has been assessed as having damage that requires significant repair work, tenants are offered alternative accommodation while repairs are undertaken on their homes.

When a property is assessed as untenable, a rent abatement is applied for the tenant. During this period, tenants are required to pay rent for the alternative property provided. This ensures that tenants have a safe place to live while their original property is being repaired. Housing ACT offer support services to help tenants navigate these situations.

4. The Total Facilities Management Agreement has a structured governance framework to ensure effective management and oversight of the repairs and maintenance of the public housing portfolio.

All urgent maintenance requests raised will be responded to, with works being completed as per the identified timeframe. If the works raised cannot be completed within the assessed timeframe due to safety risk, tenants are offered alternative accommodation while repairs are undertaken on their homes.

The ACT Government has established a taskforce to support looking at how government can better deliver repairs and maintenance services for the over 20,000 Canberrans who call public housing home.

The ACT Government is committed to consider progressively insourcing public housing repairs and maintenance. The taskforce is looking into the insourcing of works and functions such as disability modifications, domestic violence upgrades, customer service functions and reactive repairs.

5. All repairs and maintenance requests that are raised, are actioned according to the type of work required to be undertaken (e.g. responsive or planned works). If a property is assessed as having a serious health hazard or a safety risk, Housing ACT will support tenants with alternative accommodation while repairs are undertaken on their homes.
6. All repairs and maintenance requests that are raised, are actioned according to the type of work required to be undertaken (e.g. responsive or planned works). If the works cannot be undertaken the required timeframe, tenants can be supported with alternative accommodation until the works are completed.
7. Responsive works are actioned according to the timeframes outlines in question 1. If the works cannot be undertaken in the identified timeframe, tenants are supported with alternative accommodation until the works are completed.
8. As referenced in question 4, The Total Facilities Management Agreement has a structured governance framework to ensure effective management and oversight of the repairs and maintenance of the public housing portfolio.

All repairs and maintenance work is monitored and tracked through regular reporting and analysis. If works are unable to be completed as per the timelines referenced in question 1, systems are in place to ensure steps can be taken to support tenants into alternative accommodation while works are completed.

9. Please refer to question one for timeline to complete repairs and maintenance work. On occasion, there may be more than one assessment required and this is dependent on several factors including the nature of the request, the complexity of the works required, the needs of the tenant and the wider management of the social housing portfolio. Multiple

assessments may be required to verify the scope and nature of the repairs needed, ensuring accuracy before work begins. Additionally, some maintenance issues are complex and may require different specialist trades contractors to assess the problem.

10. Please refer to the response to question 4.

11. Please refer to the response to question 1.

12. The ACT Government funds review and oversight bodies such as the Auditor-General, the ACT Ombudsman, the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the Official Visitors who regularly review Housing ACT's procedures and processes.

**Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.**

  
**Yvette Berry MLA**  
**Minister for Homes and New Suburbs**

**Date:** 02/05/25

This response required 2 hours 30 minutes to complete, at an approximate cost of \$277.00.