

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY**  
**SOCIAL, PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**  
**MAY 2014**

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS(SQ)**

**SQ 1:**

The 2013 NSW Auditor General's Report 'Making the best use of public housing' states that FACS is developing a Social Housing Policy, LAHC is developing an Asset Portfolio Strategy and that FACS/LAHC are jointly developing an Estates Strategy. Could you please comment on these policies, what changes they will implement, and when they will be finalised?

**SQ 1 RESPONSE:**

The NSW Government is developing its social housing priorities which will determine the response to the Auditor General's report, 'Making the best use of public housing'. A number of key strategies, including managing the portfolio, estates and policies related to social housing, will fall out of these priorities.

FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 2:**

It seems like there are individual strategies for the development of certain estates, like the Minto development, but the committee has been unable to discover if this is guided by a broader policy. Could you please comment on whether there is a broader policy that identifies estates for possible transformation?

**SQ 2 RESPONSE:**

Work on the estates strategy has been incorporated into the Portfolio Strategy.

**SQ 3a:**

During our hearings and site visits to regional areas and parts of Sydney, it appears that maintenance is a huge issue. Although the evidence shows the stock is ageing, some tenants can't even get minor repair issues fixed adequately. What is being done to improve tenant satisfaction? Is tenant satisfaction with maintenance and repairs rectification work being measured?

**SQ 3a RESPONSE:**

Contracts for maintenance include measures of customer satisfaction and are reported in the Land and Housing Corporation Annual Report.

**SQ 3b:**

What is the average wait time on the phone to report a maintenance problem?

**SQ 3b RESPONSE:**

Average wait time this financial year on the Maintenance Line is 4.44 mins.

**SQ 3c:**

What audit or compliance policies are in place to manage contractors?

**SQ 3c RESPONSE:**

The maintenance contract includes performance measures addressing audits of work completed, standards of work, adherence to timeframes by contractors and tenant satisfaction.

**SQ 3d:**

During our hearings and site visits to regional areas and parts of Sydney, it appears that maintenance is a huge problem. Although the evidence shows the stock is ageing, some tenants can't even get minor repair issues fixed adequately.

We have received evidence that tribunal orders against the department are often not complied with. If an order is made against the department for repairs/maintenance work – what process is in place to ensure timely compliance with the order?

**SQ 3d RESPONSE:**

FACS is not aware of the basis for the suggestion that a large proportion of orders are not complied with.

Procedures to manage NCAT maintenance and repairs orders were amended and training delivered in the 2012-13 financial year. Further work is under way to set consistent practises through standardised processes and procedures.

**SQ 3e:**

Community housing providers often use local contractors for maintenance work, often reducing costs. Has Housing NSW investigated the use of local service providers for maintenance and repair work?

**SQ 3e RESPONSE:**

The Land and Housing Corporation's maintenance contract uses regional contractors who source sub-contractors, including in local areas.

**SQ 3f:**

The committee has heard about the 'Barb the Builder' Project implemented by the Illawarra Forum and the 'Handy Manny' project being implemented by Compass Housing. These programs can help to develop tenant participation and pride in their home and community, as well as development of new skills. Does Housing NSW have any similar strategies, and if not, could they be developed at a local level?

**SQ 3f RESPONSE:**

These programs are part of FACS' Handypersons Program, which is designed to provide employment and training opportunities to social housing residents. This program uses the skills and labour of tenants to undertake minor responsive maintenance and repairs for social housing residents.

The program objectives are to:

- improve the quality of life and customer satisfaction for individual tenants;

- provide employment for a small number of appropriately skilled unemployed social housing residents; and
- teach interested residents how to do small repair and maintenance work for themselves

Two program service providers (the Salvation Army NSW Property Trust and Spectrum Community Outcomes Pty Ltd) have been engaged to deliver the Handypersons Program on behalf of FACS in 24 locations across the State.

**SQ 4:**

From activity during this inquiry so far, it appears that many community housing providers do a great job in managing tenancies and in providing wrap around services and support for residents, often with limited budgets for building work and repairs. What would your response be to a proposal to increase the number of houses transferred to community housing providers for management?

**SQ 4 RESPONSE:**

The social housing priorities of government are in development and will guide the approach to the community housing sector.

FACS would need to consider whether transfers would in the long term, deliver better outcomes in NSW.

There are a total of 153,210 total dwellings in the social housing portfolio (either owned or leased from the private market). 25,954 of these are owned, leased or managed by community housing providers reflecting 16.9% of the total. In addition, 4,734 are owned and/or managed by Aboriginal CHPs reflecting 3.1% of the total.

**SQ 5:**

The committee heard evidence that approximately 12% of people sleeping rough in Sydney are veterans. What is Housing NSW doing to address the issue of veterans being a significant portion of our homeless people living on the street?

**SQ 5 RESPONSE:**

Support to people such as rough sleepers or those with mental health issues has been a key factor in planning new services in the inner city.

Many of the new inner city Sydney services will deliver support to chronically homeless men, including rough sleepers who are veterans. For example, the Inner City Assertive Outreach and Case Coordination for Homeless Vulnerable and Complex Clients Service will work with people with complex needs who are sleeping rough and provide outreach workers to directly engage with people on the streets, offering assistance and case management. This Service will work in partnership with health services, general practitioners and other services to address the needs of the chronically homeless.

**SQ 6:**

Can you provide further information about the development of Rosewood Grove and the requirement that purchasers of homes reside in the property for 7 years? Has this been effective in creating affordable housing? Any lessons learnt?

**SQ 6 RESPONSE:**

The strategy was designed to de-concentrate the estate and to promote a mix of social and privately owned housing rather than strictly about affordable housing provision. The 7 year requirement attached to the sale of properties was effective in ensuring its objectives of deconcentration and social mix were achieved.

**SQ 7:**

The committee has heard evidence about the impact of homelessness on the economy and the lack of services available to meet the growing needs of this part of our community. With proposed cuts to funding for homelessness services, what is Housing NSW doing to ensure vulnerable and disadvantaged people have access to shelter?

**SQ 7 RESPONSE:**

Funding has been increased by 9.6 per cent to \$445 million over three years for non-government organisations to deliver homelessness services to improve the lives of more than 52,000 people a year.

This also includes the reinstatement of the proposed reduction in funding to the inner city of Sydney of \$8.6 million per year to prevent and resolve homelessness and reduce repeat homelessness. Of this, an extra \$2 million will be allocated specifically for women's services in the inner city. An additional \$70 million is also being provided for complementary homelessness programs.

**SQ 8a:**

Sub13 PIAC identified issues relating to the treatment of people with mental illness. Can you advise if training is provided to staff to enable them to engage respectfully with people with mental illness who are homeless or are seeking public housing?

**SQ 8a RESPONSE:**

FACS arranges training for staff who work with vulnerable people including young people, homeless people and people who are living with mental illness. In a number of locations FACS has arranged mental health first aid training for staff, as part of local implementation of the Housing & Mental Health Agreement.

FACS is also currently developing a specialist mental health training program for client service staff in housing services. It is currently being trialled, and is expected to commence in early 2014/15.

**SQ8b:**

Is mental illness a criteria for priority housing?

**SQ 8b RESPONSE:**

To be eligible for priority housing, applicants must be eligible for social housing, in urgent need of housing and be unable to resolve that need themselves in the private rental market. Whilst mental illness is not one of the specified criteria for priority housing, many people with a mental illness qualify for priority housing on the above grounds, as their mental illness impacts their ability to maintain appropriate housing arrangements.

Information about eligibility for social housing is available on the Housing Pathways website at: <http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/Am+I+Eligible/>

**SQ 8c:**

Is there a procedure for dealing with rent arrears or complaints in relation to people with a mental illness?

**SQ 8c RESPONSE:**

FACS staff are trained to manage all arrears matters or complaints about people sensitively and professionally with regard to the personal circumstances of those people.

In a number of locations FACS has arranged mental health first aid training for staff, as part of local implementation of the Housing & Mental Health Agreement. FACS is developing a specialist mental health training program for client service staff in housing services. It is currently being trialled, and is expected to commence full roll out in early 2014/15.

**SQ 8d:**

What is the policy or procedure for addressing tenancy related debt and termination procedures that could result in homelessness?

**SQ 8d RESPONSE:**

Under the FACS Account Management Policy, whenever a tenant's account goes into arrears, FACS will work with the tenant to try to resolve the problem. When deciding how to respond to a tenant's account being in arrears, FACS will consider the following factors:

- The tenant's payment patterns.
- The amount of time the tenant has been in arrears and the arrears amount.
- The reason the tenant is in arrears.
- The tenant's capacity and willingness to repay the arrears.
- The need for involvement of support services.
- Previous arrears patterns, including the steps that have been taken to resolve the problem.

Consideration of these factors will assist FACS to determine when to:

- Negotiate a repayment arrangement
- Apply for a Specific Performance Order
- Issue a Notice of Termination
- Apply for an order of Termination and Possession.

Both before and after taking any of the above actions, FACS will continue working with the tenant to try to resolve the problem.

**SQ 8e:**

Would the department consider an 'eviction as a last resort' policy for tenants identified in hardship, either financial or health?

**SQ 8e RESPONSE:**

FACS aims to sustain tenancies wherever feasible to do so. Eviction action can only proceed in accordance with an order of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

**SQ 8f:**

Are there referrals to appropriate welfare support for tenants who are experiencing hardship, either personal or financial?

**SQ 8f RESPONSE:**

In their management of people, FACS staff make every effort to identify other programs, organisations or agencies that may be able to assist to meet the individual needs of each person. This will involve identifying an appropriate organisation, seeking person consent, and making a referral to that agency.

**SQ 8g:**

Does Housing NSW comply with the Ombudsman's Homelessness Protocol?

**SQ 8g RESPONSE:**

FACS complies with the NSW Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places.

FACS is a signatory and the lead for the Protocol. The Protocol is publically referenced on our website under Homelessness Partnerships and Agreements and alongside the "Housing and Mental Health Agreement" (HAMHA) and the "Framework for Multi-Agency Client Transition Planning to Reduce Homelessness".

**SQ 8h:**

Does it have a policy or protocol that addresses concerns about interactions between homeless people and government agencies?

**SQ 8h RESPONSE:**

The NSW Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places provides a framework for interactions between officials of participating NSW Government organisations and homeless people in public places.

The aim of the Protocol is to ensure homeless people are treated respectfully and appropriately and are not discriminated against on the basis of their homeless status.

The Protocol also facilitates a homeless person's access to housing and support services if they need or request them.

**SQ 9a: Sub 92 Churches Housing**

Can you advise of the current status of the Rentstart scheme and why it was modified in 2012?

**SQ 9a RESPONSE:**

Rentstart is an active program and includes a range of financial assistances such as Bond Loan, Advance Rent, Tenancy Assistance, Temporary Accommodation and Rentstart Move. These programs are available to eligible people to help them set up or maintain a tenancy in the private rental market. The move from Bond Grants to Bond Loan in 2012 aimed to create a more sustainable bond assistance program, assist bond recipients to build their cash reserves for future bonds and provide incentives for people to care for their private rental properties.

**SQ 9b:**

How long was the pre 2012 grant operating and how much was allocated to how many people and in what locations (by region or LGA)?

**SQ 9b RESPONSE:**

Rental assistance, including bond grants have been provided under a number of programs since the late 1980s. Validated data on funding and households assisted is only available at NSW level from 2004-05 and is a consolidated sum for Bond Grants, Advance Rent and Tenancy Assistance. For the period 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2012 Rentstart expended \$163 million and provided assistance to 166,000 households across NSW.

**SQ 9c:**

What is the budget for Rentstart since the 2012 changes, how many people has it assisted and in what locations (by region or LGA)?

**SQ 9c RESPONSE:**

The 2012/13 budget for Rentstart comprises Advanced Rent and Tenancy Assistance only as the Bond program transitioned from grants to loans in May 2012. The budget for Rentstart in 2012/13 was \$4.442 million and \$3.949 million has been allocated for 2013/14. In 2012/13 Rentstart assistance was provided to approximately 6,100 households across NSW, final figures on households assisted for 2013/14 will be available in August 2014.

**SQ 9d:**

Has there been any research into the value of the Rentstart scheme? and in relation to the effectiveness of the scheme to divert people from homelessness?

**SQ 9d RESPONSE:**

Rentstart programs are monitored and reviewed regularly to identify areas to improve service delivery and to ensure policy parameters are kept current. Rentstart provides financial assistance for people to set up and maintain their tenancy in the private rental market. It is one of a number of products or services provided by the NSW government to assist people who are at risk of homelessness. A review of Rentstart is planned to commence from July 2014.

**SQ 9e:**

Has there been any identified impact of the changes made to Rentstart in 2012?

**SQ 9e RESPONSE:**

The move from a Bond Grant to Bond Loan program in May 2012 has seen a reduction in the number of households applying for bond assistance. 11,500 households were approved for Bond Loans 2012/13 compared to 17,300 in 2011-12. Bond Loan figures on households assisted for 2013/14 will be available in August 2014.

**SQ 9f:**

Is an evaluation or research of the changes made to Rentstart since 2012 planned?

**SQ 9f RESPONSE:**

A review of Rentstart is planned to commence from July 2014.

**SQ 9g:**

Has Housing NSW reviewed or researched the Community Land Trust model?

**SQ 9g RESPONSE:**

The Department of Family and Community Services - Housing NSW examines major issues and models relating to affordable housing provision, including Community Land Trusts. In Australia, the Community Land Trust model has been researched by AHURI and The University of Western Sydney. The research indicates that in Australia and NSW legal mechanisms may need to be amended to enable Community Land Trusts to be effectively used. The research also notes that high cost of land in NSW cities makes it difficult for community groups to source land as the basis for a Community Land Trust.



**SQ 9h:**

What is the current supply of crisis housing in NSW by either region, district or LGA?

**SQ 9h RESPONSE:**

<b>FACS District</b>	<b>Subtotal of properties</b>
Central Coast	<b>69</b>
Far West	<b>0</b>
Hunter New England	<b>232</b>
Illawarra Shoalhaven	<b>136</b>
Mid North Coast	<b>65</b>
Murrumbidgee	<b>45</b>
Nepean Blue Mountains	<b>85</b>
Northern NSW	<b>100</b>
Northern Sydney	<b>30</b>
South Eastern Sydney	<b>122</b>
Southern NSW	<b>53</b>
South Western Sydney	<b>186</b>
Sydney	<b>230</b>
Western NSW	<b>55</b>
Western Sydney	<b>106</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,514</b>

*Note: this includes additional properties recently acquired for the two new specialists homelessness housing companies.*

**SQ 9i:**

What is the current status of 'Start Safely' rental subsidy program? What is the budget?

**SQ 9i RESPONSE:**

The Start Safely program will be extended for a further 4 years, commencing 2014-15. Funding of \$10.4 million will be provided in each year to assist up to 1,300 households who are escaping domestic violence and are homeless or at risk of homelessness to access housing in the private rental market.

**SQ 10a: Sub 100 – REDwatch**

Were Social Impact Assessments undertaken for Redfern and Waterloo in relation to the demolition of premises? If so, are they publicly available and if not, why not?

**SQ 10a RESPONSE:**

Properties in Redfern at the corner of Kettle St, Elizabeth St and Morehead St were demolished last year. Demolition was undertaken as the properties were not structurally sound. Social Impact Assessments are not a requirement of the approval process for demolition. They are only a requirement for redevelopment of sites.

**SQ 10b:**

Have evaluations of the Concierge Scheme, the High Rise Strategy and the Street Team Projects been undertaken and are they available?

**SQ 10b RESPONSE:**

Concierge Scheme:

An evaluation of the Waterloo Green Neighbourhood Project (Concierge Scheme) was undertaken by the City Futures Research Centre of the University of New South Wales in late 2012. An unedited Executive summary of the report was released to the public and stakeholders in September 2013.

High Rise Strategy:

The High Rise Study was commissioned in May 2005 in order to develop a strategy for high rise housing to help meet current and forecast demand for public housing in the Central Sydney Area. The Strategy was not evaluated. However, many of the issues raised in the strategy were addressed in the Waterloo Green Neighbourhood Project.

Street Team Project:

The Street Team was part of the Redfern/Waterloo Partnership Project and was run by the Department of Premier and Cabinet from late 2002 to mid 2005.

**SQ 11a: Dubbo Housing Estates**

How many residents were housed at the Gordon estate prior to announcement of demolition and redevelopment?

**SQ 11a RESPONSE:**

There were 209 tenancies within the Gordon Estate prior to the Minister's announcement.

**SQ 11b:**

How many of those residents were relocated to other social housing properties? And where?

**SQ 11b RESPONSE:**

147 relocations were managed via the Dubbo Transformation Strategy. Other tenancies ended due to other tenancy reasons, ie. vacated, other transfers, eviction for tenancy breaches.

25 of the 147 relocated to social housing outside Dubbo across NSW (at the request of the tenants) including Kempsey, Orange, Letherbridge Park, Brewarrina, Bourke, Windale, Berkeley, Warilla, Metford, Warren, Armidale, Narrabri, Coonamble, Grafton, Wallsend, Wilcannia, Wellington, Emerton, Parkes, Kyogle, Wyong.

**SQ 11c:**

How many of those residents are registered as on waiting lists?

**SQ 11c RESPONSE:**

One person was registered on the waitlist however they have recently accepted an offer of accommodation.

**SQ 11d:**

How many of those residents are now homeless?

**SQ 11d RESPONSE:**

There have been no presentations to HNSW in Dubbo of former tenants of the Gordon or Apollo estates requesting homeless service supports.

**SQ 11e:**

How many residents were housed at the Apollo estate prior to announcement of demolition and redevelopment?

**SQ 11e RESPONSE:**

There were 158 Tenancies at the Apollo Estate.

**SQ 11f:**

How many of those residents were relocated to other social housing properties? And where?

**SQ 11f RESPONSE:**

Total relocated tenants to date is 19. Of these 18 were within Dubbo, including to vacant properties within Apollo Estate. One tenant was relocated elsewhere, at their request.

**SQ 11g:**

How many of those residents are registered as on waiting lists?

**SQ 11g RESPONSE:**

23 of 158 tenancies are listed under relocation transfer. Tenants on the relocation transfer list are able to remain in their current residence until they are allocated a new property.

**SQ 11h:**

How many of those residents are now homeless?

**SQ 11h RESPONSE:**

There have been no presentations to HNSW in Dubbo of former tenants of the Gordon or Apollo estates requesting homeless service supports.

**SQ 11i:**

Has an evaluation been done of the Dubbo social housing transformation success? If so, does it identify the relocation of the prior residents? and if not, are there mechanisms to monitor and analysis where those previous residents of the estates have moved to or if how many are now on waiting lists elsewhere or if how many may be homeless?

**SQ 11i RESPONSE:**

Both an Impact Analysis and a Research Report have been completed regarding the Dubbo social housing transformation. There are no formal mechanisms in place to monitor and analyse the previous Gordon Estate residents, nor to identify if they have moved or are now on wait lists. Based on local knowledge however the majority of persons relocated remain within their relocation tenancies across Dubbo.

See Dubbo Transformation Strategy – Financial Review Business Intelligence (April 2010) – attached in response to Question 8.

**SQ 12a: National Disability Services - Sub 125**

Can clarification be given regarding the 'priority' criteria for 'most in need' and provide advice on the issue of people with disability, carers and those identified with mental illness.

**SQ 12a RESPONSE:**

The below provides information on the current policy approach in NSW. Discussions are continuing between State, Territory and Commonwealth Governments and the National Disability Insurance Agency as to the housing response in a National Disability Insurance Scheme environment.

An applicant may demonstrate that they have an urgent housing need 'most in need' if they are experiencing one or more of the following:

- unstable housing circumstances including homelessness and living in crisis or emergency accommodation,
- 'at risk' factors impacting on their personal safety and mental health including domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse or neglect, and/or
- existing accommodation is inappropriate for their basic housing requirements.

For people with a disability, carers and those identified with mental illness, they must demonstrate in their application for priority assistance how their current housing circumstances are negatively affecting their health or well being.

Consideration in the assessment process is given to the severity of a person's disability, if that disability is permanent or likely to be permanent, the impact of the current dwelling and access required to specialist and support services.

**SQ 12b:**

Is there any analysis of future need and unmet need in relation to people with a disability or a general perspective? If so, can it be provided?

**SQ 12b RESPONSE:**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported there were approximately 1,350,000 people with a disability in NSW in 2012.

People with disability are considered to be a special needs group in social housing. At 30 June 2013 there were 51,100 households or 36.4% of all social housing households that included a person receiving DSP or carers payment. 18,648 disability households were on the NSW Housing Register, 32.5% of all households on the Register.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has been modelling demand for housing assistance. Their work predicts that of the 255,000 expected NDIS participants in Australia aged between 25 and 64, between 154,000 and 193,000 will be on low incomes who may need housing assistance from some source. This figure includes those already with assistance. The national estimated unmet need for affordable housing is estimated as between 83,000 and 122,000 NDIS participants.

**SQ 12c:**

How many properties / dwellings specifically for people with disabilities have been constructed over the last 10 years?

**SQ 12c RESPONSE:**

The Land and Housing Corporation's applies liveable housing designs to its new supply program, which enables modifications if needed by individual circumstances.

Modifications for disabilities or mobility access are undertaken depending on tenant needs.

**SQ 12d:**

How many properties / dwellings for people with a disability are planned for construction in the future?

**SQ 12d RESPONSE:**

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation undertakes ongoing modification of properties for tenants with a disability depending on their individual requirements.

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation targets construction of at least 50 percent of its new dwellings to be flexible for future modification to meet the needs of tenants with a disability.

**SQ 12e:**

What is the specific budget for the next four years or longer for the construction of dwellings for people with a disability?

**SQ 12e RESPONSE:**

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation undertakes ongoing modification of properties for tenants with a disability depending on their individual requirements.

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation targets construction of at least 50 percent of its new dwellings to be flexible for future modification to meet the needs of tenants with

a disability. The costs of ensuring dwellings are modification ready are incorporated into their general construction costs, so is not a separate budget line item.

**SQ 12f:**

How much of the future identified Commonwealth NDIS budget will be allocated to providing housing for people with a disability?

**SQ 12f RESPONSE:**

The National Disability Insurance Agency is yet to determine the future level of funding for accommodation in the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Based on the Productivity Commission's "user cost of capital" model (2011) it is estimated that the NDIA will have funding at around \$550m per annum nationally at full scheme.

Currently, there is work underway to determine the best way to fund disability housing in NSW with a view to scoping different models of raising and funding the cost of capital required for people with disabilities under the NDIS. This work is being coordinated by NSW Treasury in conjunction with NSW Department of Family and Community Services and will engage key stakeholders including Department of Social Services, National Disability Insurance Agency as well as other key NSW government agencies.

**SQ 13a: Auditor General Report and recommendations – July 2013**

Has the Government delivered on the recommendations of the Auditor General's 'Making the best use of public housing' recommendations dated 30 July 2013 and could information be provided?

**SQ 13a RESPONSE:**

In September 2013 FACS responded to the Auditor General and accepted all 8 recommendations arising from 'Making the best use of public housing'.

FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 13b:**

Has a clear direction been devised to review housing funding arrangements?

**SQ 13b RESPONSE:**

FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 13c:**

REC 2 -has HNSW and FACS agreed on the objects of the Housing Act 2011 for reporting?

**SQ 13c RESPONSE:**

FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 13d:**

REC 3 - has a social housing policy or strategy been developed and who has been consulted in the process?

**SQ 13d RESPONSE:**

The NSW Government is developing its social housing priorities which will determine the response to the Auditor General's report, 'Making the best use of public housing'. FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 13e:**

REC 4 - has there been a report on the matters identified in 4a) and has 4b) been implemented?

**SQ 13e RESPONSE:**

FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 13f:**

Has HNSW provided input to the development of the strategy in relation to managing public housing estates? If so can it be provided?

**SQ 13f RESPONSE:**

FACS adopts a coordinated, whole of agency approach to managing its public housing portfolio. Priorities for estates are informed by available resources, FACS priorities and assets plans.

**SQ 13g:**

Has HNSW identified and clarified issues in relation to cost effectiveness and non asset interventions for tenants? Can information be provided?

**SQ 13g RESPONSE:**

The development of an analytical tool forms part of our response to the recommendations made in the Auditor General's report on public housing. FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 13h:**

Recommendation 8 – have plans, strategies or policy been developed to address the delivery, performance and management of public housing as per recommendation no. 8 and if so, can information be provided?

**SQ 13h RESPONSE:**

Development of the organisation plans described in recommendation 8 is well advanced.

FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 14a: Going Home, Staying Home plan**

What evidence was utilised for the change in criteria for the allocation of funds for crisis and women only services?

**SQ 14a RESPONSE:**

The Going Home Staying Home Reform did not change the criteria for allocating funds for crisis and women-only services. Services targeting only women continue to be an important part of the new service system.

The new service delivery framework is based on evidence from the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness evaluation and other research. This evidence supports person centred approaches that cater to different peoples needs and a system that responds early to prevent homelessness, supports people to move into and sustain long term housing, and provides crisis and transitional responses.

The service delivery framework was shaped through a highly collaborative process with the relevant peak non-government bodies, consumer representatives and industry experts.

**SQ 14b:**

Was there an analysis of the impact of the change in criteria and the potential closure of women's only refuge and crisis services as a result of the changes?

**SQ 14b RESPONSE:**

No Government-owned crisis property or refuge will cease to be part of the new specialist homelessness service system.

**SQ 14c:**

What funds have been allocated to providing emergency/ temporary accommodation under the SHS service budget?

**SQ 14c RESPONSE:**

All Government-owned crisis and transitional properties will continue to be available in the new specialist homelessness services (SHS) system.



As part of each Service's funding, providers can provide brokerage funding to tailor service responses to the individual needs of people, such as timely support to resolve critical issues to move a person to housing stability.

In 2013/14 the SHS Program has a budget of \$138 million. Through the program, funding is provided to NGO providers to provide support and in some cases accommodation to people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness. The Housing NSW budget allocated for the Temporary Accommodation program in 2014/15 is \$12 million. This is separate from the Specialist Homelessness Services Program budget.

**SQ 14d:**

Of the funds allocated for providing emergency/temporary accommodation what funds were spent on:

- i) motels
- ii) residential parks
- iii) boarding houses
- iv) private rental
- v) other, please specify

**SQ 14d RESPONSE:**

In 2012/13, a total of \$10.63 million was spent on providing Temporary Accommodation. Some 78% of people assisted used motels, 4% used caravan parks and 18% used other types of accommodation such as boarding houses, hostels, refuges, supported accommodation etc.

**SQ 14e:**

What is the breakdown of the Specialist Homeless Services SHS that were provided to the regions? by LGA ?

**SQ 14e RESPONSE:**

Information on specialist homelessness services packages is available by Department of Family and Community Services District on the Housing NSW website [www.housing.nsw.gov.au/GHSH](http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/GHSH). District tender outcome fact sheets are also available.

**SQ 14f:**

What funds were provided for non-accommodation services? And what were the services provided?

**SQ 14f RESPONSE:**

The Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) Program budget for 2013-14 is \$138.5 million.

The latest available data<sup>1</sup> for 2012-13 indicates that approximately 59% of people assisted by the SHS Program in NSW receive non-accommodation services.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services SHS Collection Annual Report 2012-13, NSW Supplementary Tables.

The types of support provided to SHS clients include general support, e.g. advice and advocacy, emotional support e.g. counselling, financial and employment support, referrals to mainstream services, and assistance to obtain or maintain long-term housing.

**SQ 15a: Sub 106 Youth Action**

How many dwellings are available specifically for youth in crisis?

**SQ 15a RESPONSE:**

Currently there is an estimated 356 crisis and transitional housing properties used for youth housing.

**SQ 15b:**

What specific funding is available for young people under 18 in crisis or supported accommodation?

**SQ 15b RESPONSE:**

Funding is provided to Specialist Homelessness Services to deliver services to young people.

FACS has also allocated \$27 million over 3 years to support unaccompanied children under 16 years who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The program is currently under development and anticipated to be operational in early 2015.

In addition to youth homelessness service funding, in 2013/14 \$12.25 million from the Transitional National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness 2013/14 Development Fund was used to purchase 34 properties for the Youth Housing Company. No additional funding for properties has been allocated to the Youth Housing Company in 2014/15 at this stage.

**SQ 15c:**

Does the Government provide specific education/ information resources for young people about their rights and responsibilities in relation to housing?

**SQ 15c RESPONSE:**

FACS has developed a training package, Rent it Keep it, to assist people who are seeking private rental accommodation gain the skills to secure and maintain a tenancy.

Rent it Keep it has been designed for people with little experience in the private rental market, including young people, or who have had problems with their tenancies in the past.

Support providers also assist young people to transition to the private rental market after they have resided in crisis and transitional accommodation. This includes providing support and advice in relation to their housing rights and responsibilities.

**SQ 15d:**

Is there training for staff to address the needs of young people and to ascertain and advise on what other supports/services may be suitable and available for young people who approach government agencies?

**SQ 15d RESPONSE:**

FACS arranges training for staff who work with vulnerable people including young people. Training is organised in Districts so it can be tailored to local need.

**SQ 15e:**

Has HNSW engaged young people in consultation and specifically in key consultative groups?

- i NGO Housing Partners Reference Group
- ii Social Housing Tenants Advisory Committee
- iii Community Housing Tenants Network

**SQ 15e RESPONSE:**

Yfoundations, the peak body for youth homelessness, is a key NGO partner and a member of the NGO Housing Partners Reference Group.

Young people and non-government organisations representing the views of young people are consulted with through the Social Housing Tenants Advisory Committee and the NGO Housing Partners Reference Group. Furthermore, Housing NSW consulted with young people and peak youth bodies to develop the Youth Action Plan 2009-2014. Key aims of the Plan were to better respond to the needs of young people, strengthen the partnerships through which it supports young people who need help with housing, support young people who live in social housing to engage with their communities and increase engagement with young people in general.

The Community Housing Tenants Network is facilitated by the NSW Federation of Housing Associations to support community housing tenants, including young people to better engage in decisions made by their community housing provider. The Network is a forum for community housing providers and their tenants and is not used by Housing NSW to engage with people directly.

**SQ 15f:**

Is there a strategy, policy or program for providing wrap around services for young people who are in social housing or homeless?

**SQ 15f RESPONSE:**

Under the Going Home Staying Home (GSHS) reform, Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) are required to deliver person-centred services that are built around the needs of the person, rather than programmatic responses. A person-centred approach is strengths-based with a focus on building individual and family capacity, skills, resilience and connections to community.

Additionally, FACS has recently allocated \$27million over 3 years to support unaccompanied children under 16 who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Consideration is being given to the suitability of wrap-around models for this person group in the development of this program.

Under the Transitional National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness 2013/14 Development Fund, \$12.25 million was committed to purchase properties for vulnerable young people to provide a new form of transitional housing, Transitional Housing Plus. Transitional Housing Plus is a longer term form of transitional housing integrated with support arrangements to assist people to stabilise their lives over a period of up to 5 years, and to move to independent living arrangements through engagement in education, training and employment.

The properties will be managed by the new youth homelessness housing company, My Foundations Youth Housing which is being established in partnership with the peak body, Yfoundations, to provide a specialised focus on housing solutions for young people.

**SQ 15g:**

Is funding provided for case workers for young people who are social housing tenants or are homeless?

**SQ 15g RESPONSE:**

Yes, funding is provided to Specialist Homelessness Services to deliver services to young people, which includes case work.

**SQ 16a:**

What is the current priority housing criteria?

**SQ 16a RESPONSE:**

See SQ 12a response.

**SQ 16b:**

What are criteria and or limitations for nomination allocations zone transfers?

**SQ 16b RESPONSE:**

People on the general waiting list can change their allocations zone at any time until they are made an offer of accommodation.

A person approved for priority housing is required to complete a Change of Circumstance form. The social housing provider will then complete a new assessment of the person's eligibility and housing need.

**SQ 17a:**

How many complaints were received regarding maintenance? How many related to delays, faulty work, etc

**SQ 17a RESPONSE:**

The below data is sourced from the Feedback Management System from the 10/12/2013 until 16/6/2014. Complaints are classified as either contractor behaviour whilst performing their duties or contractor timeliness which outlines concerns relating to the timeliness of the work by the contractor.

<b>Feedback type<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Complaint</b>	<b>295</b>
Contractor behaviour	225
Contractor timeliness	70
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>295</b>

**SQ 17b:**

What is the policy or procedure for auditing the work of maintenance contractors?

**SQ 17b RESPONSE:**

The maintenance contract includes performance measures addressing audits of work completed, standards of work, adherence to timeframes by contractors and tenant satisfaction.

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<sup>2</sup> The Housing Contact Centre commenced reporting on Contractor Timeliness and Contractor Behaviour via the Feedback Management System (FMS) on 10/12/13 as per the new Complaints Management Pilot commencement date.

This was initiated as part of the "Working together" protocol and was set in place to align with the requirements of the Ombudsman.

Prior to this all maintenance issues/complaints were escalated via the maintenance line and action would be completed via follow ups with contractors, work order recalls and escalations through to work supervisors.

**SQ 17c:**

How many Client Service Officers are there? Where are they located (by district, region or LGA) and what are their roles?

**SQ 17c RESPONSE:**

There are Client Service Officer and Senior Client Service Officers of various roles which encompass tenancy management services and assessment/private rental assistance services. Other roles include Specialist Officers (including Aboriginal Identified positions), Private Rental Specialists, Anti-Social Behaviour specialists, Administrative Support officers, and Housing Contact Centre Staff.

The below table lists the total number of Client Service Officers, Senior Client Service Officers and other Specialist Officers working in each District.

Table 1: Client Service Officers and Specialist Officers by District (17<sup>th</sup> June 2014)

District	Total no.
Northern Sydney	36
Central Coast	32
Hunter New England	98
Mid North Coast	36
Northern NSW	31
Western Sydney	142
Nepean Blue Mountains	37
Murrumbidgee	39
Western NSW	46
South Western Sydney	150
Sydney	75
South Eastern Sydney	81
Illawarra Shoalhaven	82
Southern NSW	27
Far West	Nil (no properties)
NSW General - Call Centre	142
<b>Total - all Districts</b>	<b>1054</b>

**SQ 17d:**

What is the status of the Glebe Affordable Housing Project?

**SQ 17d RESPONSE:**

Civil engineering design for the project has been completed and subdivision approval is underway.

**SQ 17e:**

What is the eviction policy in relation to public housing managed by the LAHC? Does it take into account disadvantage criteria eg mental illness, aged, disability?

**SQ 17e RESPONSE:**

FACS aims to sustain public housing tenancies wherever feasible to do so. Any decision to seek the eviction of a tenant is taken at a high level of management after taking into consideration the individual circumstances of the tenant. Eviction action can only proceed in accordance with an Order of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

**SQ 18a:**

Has the Government delivered on the recommendations of the Auditor General's 'Making the best use of public housing' recommendations dated 30 July 2013? and could information be provided?

**SQ 18a RESPONSE:**

In September 2013 FACS responded to the Auditor General and accepted all 8 recommendations arising from 'Making the best use of public housing'. Implementation of these recommendations is well underway

FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 18b:**

REC 1 - has a clear direction been devised to review housing funding arrangements?

**SQ 18b RESPONSE:**

FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 18c:**

REC 3 - has a social housing policy or strategy been developed and who has been consulted in the process?

**SQ 18c RESPONSE:**

The NSW Government is developing its social housing priorities which will determine the response to the Auditor General's report, 'Making the best use of public housing'. FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 18d:**

REC 4 - has there been a report on the matters identified in 4a) and has 4b) been implemented?

**SQ 18d RESPONSE:**

FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 18e:**

- I) Has an asset portfolio strategy been developed? and
- II) Have property disposal procedure audits been undertaken?

**SQ 18e RESPONSE:**

- I) Yes.
- II) Yes.

**SQ 18f:**

Recommendation no. 6 – Has the Estate Strategy been finalised?

**SQ18 f RESPONSE:**

Work on the estates strategy has been incorporated into the Portfolio Strategy which is currently under development.

**SQ 18g:**

REC 7 - Have new policies or strategies been developed to determine the cost effectiveness of asset management?

**SQ 18g RESPONSE:**

The development of an analytical tool forms part of our response to the recommendations made in the Auditor General's report on public housing. FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.

**SQ 18h:**

REC 8 - have plans, strategies or policy been developed to address the delivery, performance and management of public housing as per Rec 8 and if so can information be provided?

**SQ 18h RESPONSE:**

Development of the organisation plans described in recommendation 8 is well advanced.

FACS is currently finalising its response to the Auditor General on the recommendations arising from the 'Making the best use of public housing' report, which is due later this year. Once finalised, FACS will provide a response to the Committee.



**SQ 19:**

Of the 900 dwellings constructed over the last 10 years are you able to provide a breakdown by LGA area?

**SQ 19 RESPONSE:**

*Extension granted by Committee until 15 July.*

**SQ 20:**

What is the state contribution to the construction of those 900 dwellings over the last 10 years and what was the Commonwealth funding contribution?

**RESPONSE:**

*Extension granted by Committee until 15 July.*

**SQ 21:**

What was the average cost of a dwelling over the last 10 years, by each year?

**SQ 21 RESPONSE:**

*Extension granted by Committee until 15 July.*

**SQ 22:**

Can you provide any guidelines or policy in relation to consultation with Aboriginal communities regarding input to the design and type of housing that is developed?

**SQ 22 RESPONSE:**

As a matter of practice, the AHO consults with members of the Local Aboriginal Land Council or Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHP) when looking to build or buy new homes. Part of that consultation includes the location, the type of home being built (number of bedrooms or for people with a disability etc.) and can include a number of options for consideration on a block of land.

**SQ 23:**

Is there any policy, strategy or program that utilises the opportunity to provide training skills for Aboriginal people in relation to the design and construction of Aboriginal housing?

**SQ 23 RESPONSE:**

Refer to Answer to Supplementary Question No. 16G (March hearings). Additionally the AHO complies with the NSW Government's Aboriginal Participation in Construction Guidelines. All AHO contracts for new construction require a minimum of 20% Aboriginal employment.

**SQ 24:**

What has been the outcome of the Aboriginal Community Housing Providers program, how many providers, how many dwellings constructed?

**SQ 24 RESPONSE:**

The Build and Grow Aboriginal Community Housing Strategy supports the development of an increasingly sustainable Aboriginal Community Housing Sector that gives Aboriginal people confidence in their housing providers. It does not involve construction but rather refurbishment of existing properties.

As at 31 May 2014:

- there are 47 Aboriginal Community Housing Providers who have undertaken a performance based pathway to registration with the AHO.
- there are 49 ACHP's who have head leased their dwellings to the AHO.
- 1,956 properties have been refurbished since the program started.

**SQ 25:**

How many people have undertaken the HOME training package and how many completed the TAFE Cert IV Community Services (Social Housing) course?

**SQ 25 RESPONSE:**

Since 2012, through the Western Institute for TAFE, 129 people (delivering housing and housing related services to Aboriginal people) have completed the Cert 4 HOMES course. Additionally, this certification has been regraded to a Diploma in Social Housing with 17 people currently enrolled in the Diploma. Importantly the AHO will be seeking to promote and market the Diploma to the Aboriginal Community Housing Provider sector in 2014/15.

**SQ 26:**

How many Aboriginal people are on a waiting list for public housing? and what regions, districts or LGA?

**SQ 26 RESPONSE:**

The number of Aboriginal people waiting for public housing (including those waiting for Aboriginal Housing Office properties) as at 31 May 2014 is 4,995. Note that this does not include the 260 Aboriginal applicants who are waiting for Community Housing only as listed in QON1.

A breakdown by District is detailed in the below table.

<b>Number of Indigenous applicants who requested public housing</b>	<b>May-14</b>
Central Coast	234
Far West	63
Hunter New England	1,222
Illawarra Shoalhaven	336
Mid North Coast	291
Murrumbidgee	213
Nepean Blue Mountains	266
Northern NSW	389

Northern Sydney District	30
South Eastern Sydney District	261
South Western Sydney	304
Southern NSW	167
Sydney District	185
Western NSW	722
Western Sydney	312
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,995</b>