

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2011-12 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 7

Question No: 221

Topic: Alice Springs Transformation Plan

Hansard Page: 3 June 2011, CA 13

Senator Scullion asked:

How well are people adjusting to the new tenancy agreements, particularly in relation to quarterly inspections?

Answer:

New tenancy agreements are put in place by the Northern Territory Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services (DHLGRS) which prescribes certain responsibilities upon tenants, including paying rent and taking care of the property. The DHLGRS in turn carries out regular and consistent maintenance on the houses.

Under the tenancy agreements DHLGRS inspects all properties on a quarterly basis to ensure tenants are adhering to their lease terms and conditions. These inspections assess the general upkeep of the properties, the number of occupants living in the houses, and identify general maintenance issues. The DHLGRS is using the quarterly property inspections to build rapport, open up two-way communication and educate new town camp residents on DHLGRS' expectations for maintaining public housing properties and managing tenancies.

Additional support, training and education, including a module on visitor management is provided through the Tenancy Sustainability Program to help town camp public housing residents better manage their tenancies. In addition to this, for those people on the public housing wait list or at risk of losing their tenancy, the Intensive Support Tenancy Enabling Program (ISTEP) provides high level linked up support to ensure people are receiving targeted services to assist in gaining, supporting and maintaining their tenancy.

To date, DHLGRS has not been required to evict any tenant on the town camps, nor has any resident surrendered their tenancy agreement. No notices to remedy have been issued by the Department to rectify resident damage to properties, and DHLGRS has not issued any Acceptable Behaviour Agreements on the town camps.