

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2012-13 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 7

Question No: 291

Topic: Remote Housing

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

How many houses have been deemed to be Beyond Economic Repair in the Northern Territory since 30 June 2009?

Which agency makes the decision as to whether a house is Beyond Economic Repair?

What are the decision making principles which guide the decision to deem a house to be Beyond Economic Repair?

Which communities in the Northern Territory have houses which have been deemed to be Beyond Economic Repair?

How many houses in each community in the Northern Territory have been deemed to be Beyond Economic Repair?

What mechanism exists for review of the decision to deem a house to be Beyond Economic Repair?

How many houses have been vacated after being deemed to be Beyond Economic Repair in the Northern Territory since 30 June 2009?

Answer:

Territory Housing of the NT Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services makes decisions regarding Beyond Economic Repair houses based upon estimated cost and structural engineers' reports.

The Northern Territory Government advises there are two principles used to determine if a house should be deemed as Beyond Economic Repair:

- a. The structure is unable to be repaired and does not represent value for money; or
- b. Repairs will not extend the life of the asset and does not represent value for money.

The NT Government advise that where a structural engineer makes an assessment that a building is structurally unsound and the house is unsafe, that assessment would not be over turned. The decision that assesses a house to be Beyond Economic Repair can be reviewed during the detailed scoping of works under the capital works program of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. If a tenant wants to challenge an

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assessment they can raise this with their local Community Housing Officer or via the NT Government's housing complaints and appeals process.

A house can be deemed to be Beyond Economic Repair yet structurally sound and still safe for habitation. In these circumstances, the house will not meet the requirements of the NT *Residential Tenancies Act* but be covered by an Occupancy Information Document and subject to a maintenance levy. Where a house is deemed Beyond Economic Repair and structurally unsound no rent is levied. Since June 2009, one house deemed Beyond Economic Repair has been condemned and the occupants were relocated due to the safety of the structure.

The NT Government advises they do not regularly report data on houses beyond economic repair.

Please list all other Branches/Offices/Departments Consulted:

1.

	Action Officer:	Cleared by:
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Position:	Executive Director	Acting Deputy Secretary
Branch/Group:	Remote Housing Northern Territory	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
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Cleared by Group Manager	Yes ☒ No ☐	Date: 29.6.12
Cleared by Deputy Secretary	Yes ☒ No ☐	Date:
		GM Initial
		DS Initial

Officer who will address this question at the next Estimates	Pat Sowry
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