



**Yvette Berry MLA**

Deputy Chief Minister  
Minister for Early Childhood Development  
Minister for Education and Youth Affairs  
Minister for Housing and Suburban Development  
Minister for Women  
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence  
Minister for Sport and Recreation

Member for Ginninderra

**Rebecca Vassarotti MLA**

Minister for the Environment  
Minister for Heritage  
Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services  
Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction

Member for Kurrajong

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Mr Jochen Zeil

Chairperson

North Canberra Community Council (NCCC) committee

[jochen.zeil@anu.edu.au](mailto:jochen.zeil@anu.edu.au)

Dear Mr Zeil *Jochen*

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 June 2022, regarding tenant relocations under the *Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program* (the Program).

We recognise your advocacy comes from a place of deep commitment to our community. This is a commitment we share. We are working to ensure we meet the significant need in our community and treat everyone in the community with respect and care. Given the housing affordability crisis we are currently facing, we are absolutely committed to increasing the number of households we can provide homes to, improving our public housing stock and ensuring our tenants have homes which are meeting their needs.

We have been working to deliver this for a number of years through the Program. This will see 1,000 homes renewed and add an additional 400 homes to the Housing ACT portfolio. It supports the work of the ACT Housing Strategy and its goal to strengthen social housing assistance by delivering safe and affordable housing to support low income and disadvantaged Canberrans.

Canberra's public housing stock is the oldest and most inefficient within Australia. We also know our tenants' needs are changing, with ageing, disability and shifting household composition impacting on their housing requirements. In addition to increasing public housing stock, these are the other key drivers for the Program.

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The Program highlights the complex nature of selling and redeveloping properties, and the need to meet demand within Canberra. It is working to balance the needs of the current tenants, those experiencing homelessness or in crisis and more generally, provides accountability to the wider community. We are committed to ensuring the Program delivers housing which meets the needs of current tenants, particularly as these needs change over time, as well as providing an opportunity for more people in need to be provided with a safe and secure home.

Until February 2022, the Program was a voluntary “opt in” model, which saw the program success sit at approximately 20%. To ensure all efforts were undertaken prior to changing this model, different phases or approaches to the Program were attempted in aim of raising the success rate. Whilst these efforts saw the Program success increase to approximately 40%, the Program remained unviable in the current format. Recognising the significance of this change, we engaged with a range of community organisations to ensure this occurred in an appropriate manner and protected the rights of current tenants. We continue to work with this group to refine the Program and to ensure this, we continue to implement it in a way which responds to the needs of affected tenants.

The Community Services Directorate through Housing ACT is continuing to refine and better articulate processes for tenants seeking exemptions from inclusion in the Program, and to strengthening provision of ongoing relocation support. A key aim of the Program is ensuring these processes are better understood by tenants and stakeholders.

Housing ACT has been progressing the commitment through consulting stakeholders, and engaging tenants to develop the *Growth and Renewal Exemptions Policy and Practice Guideline*. Housing ACT has been working with the *Growing and Renewing Inclusive Partnership* (GRIP) to obtain comprehensive advice about the relocation program. Input about the exemption process has been sought from GRIP members.

The GRIP members met on 3 May 2022 and discussed the exemption process in detail and members provided further input. This input is greatly valued and will result in an improved process and greater transparency. Housing ACT is currently collating the additional input for the *Policy and Practice Guideline*.

We understand that this process will be difficult for many tenants. Housing ACT has worked to ensure the needs of tenants are met through dedicated, highly skilled staff supporting tenants through the relocation process and connecting with other support agencies where needed. These Tenant Relocation Officers have the skills to work with tenants with complex needs in a trauma-informed way to ensure a strengths-based, person-centred approach. This approach means working with tenants and their supports to understand their needs and circumstances, and then offering housing options specific to them.

The ACT Government is committed to ensuring tenants being asked to relocate receive wraparound support services to ensure their individual needs are met before, during and after the relocation process.

Housing ACT will continue to work closely with tenants, their support networks and community service providers, as part of an extensive engagement process, to relocate tenants to alternative housing which best meets their housing needs both now and into the future. We greatly appreciate support organisations and advocates assisting tenants to access accurate information, to be able to engage in a supported manner and ensure options being provided specifically respond to each tenants' needs.

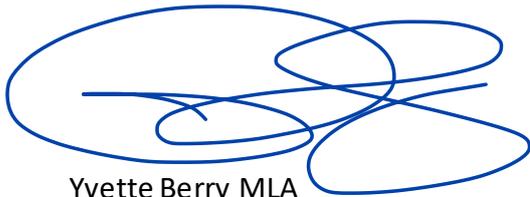
We encourage affected tenants to contact the Tenant Relocation Officers listed on the correspondence from Housing ACT to discuss their needs and have any outstanding questions answered to ensure they can be well supported when transitioning to their new homes.

Many tenants who have already relocated as part of the program have had a positive experience, even if they were reluctant to move at first. Some tenants have chosen to share their stories about the move, and they can be found on the Housing ACT website at:

[www.communityservices.act.gov.au/hcs/our-stories](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/hcs/our-stories)

We understand Ms Michelle Scicluna, Assistant Director of Tenant Relocations reached out to invite you on 7 June 2022, to an information session with the Tenant Relocations Team which you have declined. We encourage you to engage with Michelle for any future enquiries. She may be contacted directly on 6205 3308 or at [michelle.scicluna@act.gov.au](mailto:michelle.scicluna@act.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



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Minister for Housing and Suburban Development  
Services  
01/07/2022



Rebecca Vassarotti MLA  
Minister for Homelessness and Housing  
24/06/2022