

ISCCC Public Forum 12th July 2022

Public Housing Issues

Speakers:

Geoff Aigner, Executive Branch Manager, Housing ACT

Emma Campbell, CEO ACT Council of Social Services (ACTCOSS)

Jon Stanhope, former ACT Chief Minister

Khalid Ahmed, Adjunct Professor, Institute of Government and Policy Analysis, University of Canberra, and former senior ACT Government treasury Official.

David Denham, President Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association (GNCA)

Issues raised in discussion in response to speakers' presentations (which have been uploaded to the ISCCC website):

- Salt and Pepper policy is designed to spread public housing evenly across Canberra. However it is important for tenants to remain in their communities which implies more public housing in the Inner North and South. There are no community facilities such as childcare or healthcare in new suburbs.
- Tenants are given a choice of region (e.g. Belconnen) and built form.
- Statistics should be collected on movement and what went well in relocation programs.
- The GNCA has asked ACAT to review the approval of plans to build 3 residences at 18 Lockyer St.
- Housing ACT puts some vacated properties on the market and redevelops others. The decision is complicated and depends on factors such as the property layout or how old the building is.
- While some tenants who moved voluntarily are happy with the move, some did not realise they had a choice. The current involuntary program is a deep injustice to highly vulnerable people.
- Does the current financial model extract maximum value? Houses can be upgraded so maybe we should go back to the drawing board.
- Housing ACT has lots of data on tenants as it works with 11,000 every day.

- ACT government pays ACTCOSS to get feedback on what is not working but Housing ACT doesn't listen.
- The target for the vacancy rate is less than 4% which allows for maintenance and re-development.
- One tenant in a heritage property in Kingston says maintenance is not done properly eg after the hailstorm replacement guttering was nailed to the rotten fascia boards because the tradesman was told not to replace them. The tenant has been told maintenance costs too much, but it would be less if done properly in the first place.
- Public Housing adds to community diversity. Children mix together in public schools and the community is richer. Public Housing in the Inner South has fallen since Stuart Flats, Gowrie Court and Red Hill flats were sold for private development.
- If starting the process again Housing ACT would look at improving communications.