
MEDIA RELEASE

22 June 2022

For immediate circulation

ESTIMATES DAY 6: HOUSING AND HOMELANDS MINISTER

Shadow Minister for Remote Housing and Town Camps, Bill Yan, says it's disappointing the Minister for Housing and Homelands refused to say whether her department will seek restitution from offenders found guilty of damaging, or setting fire to, homes during ongoing violence in the remote community of Wadeye.

"It was today revealed Territory taxpayers will foot the bill for more than \$5 million worth of damage to homes in Wadeye. That figure is expected to rise significantly, because the cost is only based on damage to 80 homes.

"Of the 288 public housing properties in Wadeye, the department confirmed 125 were damaged – 22 suffered serious fire damage. This impacted or displaced 545 people.

Opposition questioning also uncovered:

- There is more than \$60 million in outstanding rent from remote public housing tenants;
- There are more than 5,902 applications on the waiting list for urban public housing and only 5,909 properties across the NT;
- That means more than double the amount of people need urban public housing compared to what is available;
- The general wait times for public housing has blown out to between 8 – 10 years in some areas;
- Currently there are 293 vacant public housing properties across the NT;
- On average, it takes 130 days (or almost four months) to turnaround properties between tenants; and
- The Department is spending \$4.1 million on operational costs for Safe House Care, despite only two young people currently living in the facility – why isn't this cost covered by Territory Families?

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