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## **Audit identifies more opportunities for the Department of Communities to intervene earlier and limit disruptive behaviour by public housing tenants**

Western Australia's Auditor General, Ms Caroline Spencer, has today presented a *Managing Disruptive Behaviour in Public Housing* report that informs Parliament and the WA community about how effectively the Department of Communities (the Department) manages disruptive tenants living in the State's public housing system.

The audit confirmed that the Department adequately manages the large numbers of disruptive behaviour and illegal activity complaints it receives each year – almost 20% of the public housing estate. Staff give due consideration to the circumstances surrounding an incident, and collect evidence from both tenants and the complainant/s using a transparent and timely resolution process - 90% of complaints are resolved within its 30-day target.

The audit found that the Department has progressed most of the initiatives in its *Disruptive Behaviour Management Strategy*. It has successfully implemented policies and procedures that outline how complaints are managed and resolved; introduced stronger sanctions that can be used in response to disruptive tenants where required; and it also launched a tenant support and education program.

However, the audit also revealed if the Department is to effectively reduce incidents of disruptive behaviour from occurring in the first place, it needs to make the most of opportunities to intervene earlier during discussions with tenants, and to introduce a more holistic approach to tenancy management by improving information and intelligence sharing arrangements with other government agencies who also provide support services to public housing tenants.

The Department has acknowledged that aspects of its *Disruptive Behaviour Management Strategy* that address early intervention are yet to be prioritised and actioned. The report recommends that staff should better use their existing contact time with tenants to employ early intervention strategies and preventative measures to limit any potential disruptive behaviour.

Auditor General, Ms Caroline Spencer, said 'Intervening earlier will create more opportunities to improve the wellbeing of people who access the state's public housing system'.

'A recognised key to assisting vulnerable people sustain long-term tenancies requires the Department to better utilise existing tenant behavioural data often held across many government agencies and human services providers. This will enable the Department to build a better understanding of its tenants and build stronger relationships with vulnerable people who they have identified as being at risk of displaying disruptive behaviour,' she said.

The Auditor General also tabled an *Opinions on Ministerial Notifications* report that reviews decisions by Ministers not to provide information to Parliament. These include:

- The Minister for Finance, the Hon Ben Wyatt MLA, decision not to provide information to Parliament about payers of payroll tax and the amount paid by each.
- The Minister for Water, the Hon Dave Kelly MLA, decision not to provide Parliament with unredacted Annual Reports from Liveringa Station.



You can read today's *Managing Disruptive Behaviour in Public Housing* and *Opinions on Ministerial Notifications* reports at [audit.wa.gov.au](http://audit.wa.gov.au)

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