

**Answers to questions taken on notice by Defence Housing Australia –  
Budget Estimates 2011-12, Tuesday 31 May 2011**

**Question: Senator Ludlam - ‘What are the current maintenance costs to keep them habitable?’ (Page 125)**

**Answer:**

Ongoing maintenance for vacant properties relates to regular grounds’ upkeep of gardens and lawns. The cost of this is approximately \$800 per year per property.

**Question: Senator Ludlam - ‘So they are habitable – people could move in if Defence changed the policy?’(Page 125)**

**Answer:**

There are 395 houses on RAAF Base Darwin. Presently 224 are vacant and deemed beyond economical repair or requiring significant upgrade works. Seven houses are vacant and are available for allocation to Defence Force members. The remaining 164 are tenanted by Defence members and their families. The majority of the houses at RAAF Base Darwin do not meet Defence's minimum housing standard and would require major upgrades to make them compliant. Few Australian Defence Force Members are choosing to select houses at RAAF Base Darwin as they prefer to live in the newer and better quality houses being provided by Defence Housing Australia (DHA) off base in Darwin.

**Question: Senator Ludlam - ‘What costs are incurred for additional security services, given that you now have a half-empty estate?’ (Page 126)**

**Answer:**

DHA together with Defence has put in place security measures that ensure the security of the vacant properties, provide a visible presence to the residents and make casual observers aware the properties are patrolled. The program includes a nightly patrol by vehicle and a nightly inspection of vacant properties. The program ensures that all properties are inspected over a period of time and any security issues or emergency maintenance such as burst pipes are remediated immediately. The cost of this patrol is \$1126.00 per month.

**Question: Senator Ludlam - ‘Are there plans to depopulate that estate and get people out?’ (Page 126)**

**Answer:**

On 3 June 2011, the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, the Hon Warren Snowdon MP, announced that up to 8.7 hectares of land in the existing housing area will continue to be used for Defence housing. He has also directed Defence to develop housing options for the site. Defence will occupy these houses until alternative housing is provided off base by Defence Housing Australia or replacement houses are constructed on the base.