

Question on Notice

No. 489

Asked on 24 May 2022

MR T NICHOLLS ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, MINISTER FOR WOMEN AND MINISTER FOR THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (HON S FENTIMAN) –

QUESTION:

Will the Attorney-General provide the current average wait time for applications for new property licences, renewing existing property licences and restoring property licences as well as the number of applications for each?

ANSWER:

I thank the member for Clayfield for his question.

Property occupation licences include real estate agents, resident letting agents, auctioneers, real estate corporations, resident letting corporations, auctioneer corporations and real estate salesperson registrations.

I am advised the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) endeavours to finalise all new applications and renewal applications within four to six weeks of receiving a complete application. However, this timeframe can vary depending on the number of applications on hand and on circumstances outside of the OFT's control, such as the time taken to receive the results of a national criminal history check.

There has been an unprecedented increase in demand for licences and registration certificates in the property industry. In the 2021 calendar year, the OFT received 10,923 new property industry licence applications compared to 6,543 received in 2020, a 67% increase. This, together with increases in other occupational sectors and disruptions caused by COVID, has created challenges in maintaining service delivery standards regarding the timeframe to issue a licence.

As at 25 May 2022, the OFT had the following numbers of real estate applications on hand and being processed:

- 638 new property occupation licence applications;
- 293 new real estate salesperson applications; and
- 2,416 property occupation licence or registration renewal and restoration applications. (Note: restorations are licences or registrations restored on lodgement of an application within 3 months of a licence or registration expiry date).

The average waiting time for a new licence as of 25 May 2022 is 6.5 weeks.

The OFT has also developed and released an online platform enabling a real estate salesperson or individual real estate agent to renew their registration certificate or licence online. Online renewals take no more than 24 – 48 hours to process if the application is complete.

The online platform was extended to new applications in November 2021. This and further planned enhancements of systems is expected to reduce processing timeframes into the future.

In accordance with the *Property Occupations Act 2014*, a property agent licence and real estate salesperson registration remains in force once a renewal application is received by the OFT.