

Half empty Port Hedland workers village costs WA Government \$610,000 per month, says Opposition

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TAXPAYERS forked out \$53 million for a “service workers village” in South Hedland, which remains half empty.

The State Opposition revealed today the WA Government in 2012 awarded a contract to Fleetwood Corporation to build and operate a 293 service workers village in South Hedland.

But 161 units remain unoccupied in what is known as Osprey Village. Only 132 units out of 293 are occupied.

In addition, Fleetwood is being paid a “fixed fee” of \$610,000 a month for management of the village.

Opposition leader Mark McGowan said today the government should never have exposed taxpayers to a multi-million dollar risk.

He said the \$610,000 a month payment to Fleetwood, “equates to \$7.32 million a year or \$2081 a month for every unit” — even though “half of them are empty.”

Housing Minister Bill Marmion hit back this afternoon, saying: “No other Government has confronted the housing and planning challenges that faced Hedland like we have.

“Unlike the Opposition - which left the State with an affordability crisis, chronic land shortage and a spiralling public housing waiting list - the Liberal-National Government has proudly committed to creating a liveable and sustainable Port Hedland.

”Nowhere is this clearer than when you look at the size of the local waiting list - it has dropped by more than one-third since 2010, far more than the average reduction State wide.

“History will prove us right in the Pilbara – and you only need to ask one of Australia’s most respected demographers and futurists, Bernard Salt, who just recently backed our Pilbara

Cities vision.

“There have been hundreds of inquiries for homes in the Osprey Village and there is a strong uptake, which is constantly pushing up occupancy rates.”

- **Government attacked for buying Pelago units in Karratha that it now can't sell**