



A guide to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy - YourSay

We encourage you to take the short survey (called an online submission form) there are only five questions and we've prepared some tips for you below – write your own unique answers or add to ours – it's up to you! Please share with anyone who may be interested! The discussion topics are the same as the survey questions and we are going to start adding to these soon. Here's the link: <https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/decisions/housing-and-homelessness-strategy/about>

Question 1 – What does your home and your community/neighbourhood mean to you?

A home is more than physical shelter, it is where people feel safe and secure, store their belongings, look after themselves and their families and have a base upon which they can participate socially and economically. Home can be a place of refuge from the world. Having a home means that people can access education, employment and civil society. Meanings of home are subjective – they are different for different people. Home can be symbolised by bricks and mortar, being with friends and family or tied to a certain place. With the number of people experiencing homelessness on the rise, a South Australian housing strategy should not merely address the basic human right to shelter, but the right for all citizens to have a home, and every aspect of the housing system.

People feel a sense of belonging to their street, suburb or neighbourhood when they have friends and family around them. People who have resided in one location for longer periods are more likely to feel a sense of belonging to where they live than people who are newly arrived. Communities need not be bound by geography but may be made up of interest groups, sports clubs, on-line forums or peers and these relationships should not be confused with physical locations or neighbourhoods. Governments cannot make communities.

Question 2 – How can we use our current homes and housing system to deliver better outcomes?

Emergency accommodation – There is not enough emergency accommodation to meet demand, evidenced by the growth in the use and cost of motels. State Government should increase the number of crisis beds available in Adelaide, Greater Adelaide and the regions.

Rooming houses – State Government must better regulate rooming houses to ensure vulnerable residents have access to their legal rights and adequate support to participate in social and economic life.

Supported accommodation – There is not enough supported accommodation to meet demand and State Government should invest in at least one more purpose-built rooming house to replicate The Terraces, to be operated by a not for profit. Ideally, each region would have a similar accommodation option.

Social housing – There is not enough social housing to meet demand and State Government must invest in social housing over the next 30 years to address the gap between demand and supply so that we can reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness.

Private rental – The cost of private rental is out of reach of thousands of South Australian families who require social housing. State Government should strengthen renter protections, continue to provide bond guarantees to people living on low incomes and consider creating a scheme that incentivises landlords to rent to people living on low incomes.

Empty residential properties – State Government to explore how to incentivise landlords to rent empty investment properties to renters living on low incomes.

Empty commercial properties – State Government to explore how underutilised commercial spaces could be activated to provide shelter to people experiencing homelessness.

Home ownership – State Government to develop with Homestart, a new banking product for households in the bottom two income quintiles, to make home ownership a possibility and review the Affordable Homes Program to increase its uptake by people living on low incomes.

Question 3 – What are the emerging future needs in housing? What needs to change and what are your solutions for tackling them?

Housing affordability continues to decline in South Australia for home ownership and private rental. Unemployment and high utilities costs mean that greater numbers of people are struggling to afford housing and the gap between paying an income-based rent and even the cheapest private rental is widening. The Strategic Intent acknowledges an increase in rental stress for low income households where it has almost doubled in eight years from 22% in 2007-2008 to 39% in 2015-2016, constituting around 46,500 households. An increase in the supply of social housing is critical to meet current and future needs in housing.

What needs to change is the attitude that social housing is purely a welfare measure. The State Government needs to start thinking of social housing as an investment in not only our economy but also in our social fabric.

We should tap into the land owned by not for profits to take the cost of land out of the new construction of housing and explore build to rent models, enabling land-owners to retain and grow their assets. Government could take a leadership role in this space by encouraging new models that accommodate a proportion of social housing without government subsidy.

Inclusionary zoning should be mandatory in South Australia and where there is residential rezoning, value increases should be captured for the specific purpose of including social housing rather than contribute to private developer profit margins.

We should look at better ways to work with the building industry who want to build houses and the customers who need a more affordable product.

State Government could lobby the Federal Government to bring back an improved rental incentive scheme.

Question 4 – What is the most important thing to you in the one-page Strategic Intent? What's missing? What needs refinement? What needs strengthening?

The most important thing in the Strategic Intent is that it addresses the housing system as a whole and includes State Government, industry and the not for profit sector. The recognition that housing is a form of economic infrastructure is a step forward. We would like to see social housing specifically identified as economic infrastructure.

There are many economic flow-on effects of investment in social housing such as increased employment, education, community participation, better health outcomes, and reduced crime and incarceration rates. The costs of investment are offset by reduced expenditure on a range of health care, support and human services that exist due to the myriad of health and social problems that arise out of increased rental stress and homelessness.

We would also like to see increased resources for private renter information, education, advice, advocacy and representation and the need for a long-term plan. For the reform of the homelessness system we need to avoid a wholesale tender process in order to keep what is working well and develop services that are underperforming.

Question 5 – How can the housing system be more inclusive and responsive to people that struggle to access its current options? Including Aboriginal people, people experiencing domestic violence, young people, key workers, older people, people leaving custody and care, people with disabilities and homelessness.

The housing system must cater to the needs of people who are vulnerable, living on low incomes and residing in regional and rural areas. There is not enough emergency accommodation in regional and rural areas, especially for young people and the victims of domestic violence so we should invest more in working with men and keeping families together where it is safe to do so.

Aboriginal peoples consistently experience racial discrimination in the private rental market. There needs to be an increase in private rental liaison officers, to assist vulnerable people and Aboriginal peoples gain access to the private rental market and help to counter discrimination. We should employ Aboriginal people to provide culturally appropriate tenant advice and advocacy. State Government must strengthen renter protections and continue to provide bond guarantees to ensure that the private rental market is accessible for people living on low incomes.

Social housing stock must be increased to meet demand; culturally appropriate housing design that can accommodate extended families must be developed to suit cultural groups.

People experiencing homelessness deserve shelter as housing is a basic human right. The homelessness system should have the capacity to assist all people into emergency accommodation and ensure that housing pathways are clear and easily accessible as a long-term solution to homelessness.