



National Housing and Homelessness Plan Submission

Shelter SA is the peak body for housing in South Australia and a member of National Shelter. We are pleased to make this submission to the National Housing and Homelessness Plan (the Plan) consultation.

Shelter SA fully supports the joint submission to the Plan consultation by National Shelter and the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA).

Shelter SA members consist of many of the major charities in South Australia, community housing providers, human service providers and a smaller number of corporate associate members. Shelter SA constituents are low income individuals and households who live with the greatest disadvantage when it comes to securing a home and people who are experiencing homelessness. We provide some additional information to the consultation below.

Restoring Fair Access to Home Ownership

An increasing number of Australians are locked out of home ownership opportunities due to affordability. There is a growing number of people who retire without completing their mortgages which can plunge lower income households into poverty. Demand for rental housing, including social housing (public and community housing) does not meet current or future needs.

Shelter SA fully supports the imperative of increased and continued government investment in social housing and effective housing policy as a priority, but there is another opportunity that could and should be supported by governments.

In Australia, we have high levels of indebtedness when it comes to housing. We also continue to build large, increasingly expensive dwellings on increasingly expensive land. Recent labour and materials shortages are causing longer than usual time lags in building completions and building companies are being placed into liquidation to the detriment of their customers. Innovation and change are much needed.

A new home ownership product at a price point that is affordable for low income households, would act to ease housing stress, affordability and availability pressures on lower income households, homelessness services, the social housing system and the rental market by restoring access to home ownership to those who are locked out of the market. Creating opportunities to increase home ownership would also improve security of tenure which is greatly lacking in the private rental market.

Shelter SA considers low income households as those with an annual income of \$30,000 or below. An alternative dwelling price of \$200,000 or lower would enable low income households to achieve a mortgage with a very small deposit and affordable repayments, even if they are single, older and/or relying on an aged pension.

A much lower price point than current median house prices could be achieved by harnessing existing legal structures and housing construction alternatives. Firstly, building modular or pre-fabricated

housing, with a smaller footprint than a traditional build (two bedroom), high quality design, materials and energy efficiency could be manufactured more quickly and at less expense, when built at scale.

Secondly, similar to retirement village living, creating land lease communities, that only sell the dwellings (or provide a right to occupy) and lease the dwelling sites could enable a more affordable price, allow land owners to retain the ownership of their land, take advantage of capital growth and create ongoing cash flow.

Shelter SA has done a significant amount of work on this topic which can be viewed in our [powerpoint](#) and [concept document](#) on our website. This work is guided by a set of principles that support the creation of modern villages – places where people aspire to live and that offer the amenities and community that we all want and need.

I encourage you to read “[Modernise or Die](#)” by Mark Farmer, who in February 2016, was commissioned by the Construction Leadership Council, at the request of Brandon Lewis and Nick Boles (the ministers for Housing & Planning & Skills respectively at that time) to undertake a review of the United Kingdom’s construction labour model. The review was asked to focus on areas as follows:-

- Evidence of how the construction labour model and recruitment practices impact on incentives for skills development in the sector (including in the supply chain) and on the introduction of more novel techniques such as off-site construction.
- What business models and other arrangements could better support skills and skills pipelines in the sector?
- What measures could improve wider incentives for capacity investment and the introduction of new ways of working?
- What are the barriers and enablers to greater use of off-site construction?
- How could the range of participants in the UK housing market be broadened, including through the better introduction of institutional funds?

Inclusionary Zoning

Shelter SA fully supports the introduction of a national framework for mandatory inclusionary zoning that includes social housing rather than “affordable housing”. The concept of affordable housing at a price point of 80% of market prices, no longer assists low and moderate income households. If profits are generated through increased value due to rezoning and through market sales or rents, a proportion of these should be directed to social infrastructure, that is social housing, that assists those living with the greatest housing need, rather than the middle classes and average income earners.

Renting & Systems Advocacy

Building on the need for renting advocacy outlined in the National Shelter and CHIA joint submission, Shelter SA would like to add that there is an imperative for national leadership to enable systemic renting advocacy, which is undertaken by tenant unions and other organisations across the country. Both individual advice and advocacy and systems advocacy on policy and legislation must be adequately funded across the States and Territories to meet the growing demand for assistance and change.

In South Australia for example, there is no State Government funded Shelter organisation, homelessness peak body or tenant union however, there is a funded service that provides individual advocacy for renters, Rent Right SA.

Not for Profit Peak Bodies

National Shelter and CHIA do not receive any government funding. The national not for profit advocacy work these organisations undertake is critical to the effectiveness of State based advocacy and informing the Federal Government. From a Shelter SA perspective, their input has been harnessed by Federal Government to assist them in gathering intelligence from our sectors and members and to support their work as needed, politically.

To properly reflect the value of their input, it would be most appropriate to fund them as integral bodies that provide effective and efficient mechanisms for the government to consult and formulate evidence-based housing policy.

Cross-Portfolio Policies & Funding

Unsurprisingly, several national policies and strategies refer to housing because adequate shelter is a basic human right, a social determinant of health and meets a basic human need so that people may fulfil their potential. While housing is often mentioned, it is rare to see any cross-portfolio targets or outcomes that address housing need among various constituents and a federal undertaking to achieve this outcome in future would be welcomed.

For example, under the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children, the First Action Plan 2023-27 includes the below text but does not prescribe targets, specific actions or direct funding:

The Australian, state and territory governments will work together to improve access to safe and secure housing for victim-survivors escaping violence, including from crisis accommodation to longer-term, sustainable social and private housing options, including access to schemes for affordable rental and owner occupied homes.

Additional Information

Please also view our recent [submission to the worsening rental crisis](#) and State submissions to the [renting legislation review](#) and [parliamentary inquiry into housing availability](#). Our 2022 [renting research report Moving On](#) is also relevant to the situation of renters and housing.

Please contact me if you require any further information.

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