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Infrastructure Victoria's 30,000 new affordable homes will tackle homelessness head-on

The state peak for homelessness is thrilled with Infrastructure Victoria's recommendation for an additional 30,000 new affordable properties for low income earners, saying this kind of investment would allow Victoria to effectively provide housing for its most vulnerable citizens.

Infrastructure Victoria's 30-year Draft Infrastructure Strategy, released today, emphasises affordable housing as a key action area. The Council to Homelessness Persons (CHP) says the proposals contained in the strategy would lift the State's lagging levels of social housing and tackle homelessness head-on.

Victoria's social housing stock is amongst the lowest in the country with 32,000 Victorians currently waiting for public housing, and people waiting years to get into public housing.

"Victoria is increasingly a State of housed and housed-nots. Infrastructure Victoria's proposals would deliver the change needed to enable people on low incomes to live near to work opportunities and services," said Council to Homeless Persons CEO, Jenny Smith.

"The strategy recognises the vital role that housing plays in people's lives. It paves a way to create more low-cost houses, not just the roads that connect them."

To boost social housing levels, Infrastructure Victoria has proposed both direct funding of social housing and the immediate implementation of Inclusionary Zoning, a strategy to require new building developments to include a minimum proportion of social housing.

"Investing in social housing and introducing Inclusionary Zoning would make sure low paid workers can live near job opportunities, both benefitting them and strengthening our economy," said Ms Smith.

CHP also says that Infrastructure Victoria's proposal to invest in crisis accommodation will be most effective when delivered in tandem with a new supply of social housing.

"We're seeing a bottleneck of people in crisis accommodation who cannot be exited into a home because there's not enough social housing. It's a vicious circle," said Ms Smith.

"The housing affordability crisis and homelessness are two sides of the same coin. Delivering responses to homelessness without boosting the supply of affordable housing is like bailing water on a sinking ship," she said.

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