



Homelessness Australia

Creating a framework for ending homelessness

Peak applauds ALP homelessness announcement, and calls for much-needed new investment in social housing

The national peak body for homelessness has welcomed today's announcement from the Australian Labor Party of a range of housing affordability measures, including the restoration of a National Housing Supply Council, a Safe Housing Funding program which restores \$88 million of capital funding for crisis accommodation for vulnerable groups, nomination of a housing minister, changes to negative gearing and capital gains tax, and renewal of the National Affordable Housing Agreement with new measurement targets.

"The ALP has announced a comprehensive suite of measures that collectively will help us to slowly turn the tide on the homelessness crisis that grips our nation," said Jenny Smith, Chair, Homelessness Australia.

"Last year over a quarter of a million Australians needed help from homelessness services, an increase of 9% in just 12 months, driven by the brutal housing crisis that is pushing families, the elderly and young people out of private rental and into rooming houses, caravan parks and crisis accommodation."

Ms Smith urged both sides of Government not to ignore the desperate need for a significant increase in social housing, with 200,000 people on public housing waiting lists nationally.

"Today's package of initiatives would be further enhanced by new funding for public and community housing so that hundreds of thousands of Australians languishing on waiting lists can finally close the door on homelessness,"

Ms Smith also took the opportunity to reiterate the importance of the continuation of the \$1.3 billion National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) which currently funds public housing and homelessness services. The future of the NAHA has been cast in shadow since the Federal Treasurer Scott Morrison hinted that it may be redirected for other purposes in the May budget.

"Repurposing the NAHA would be an unmitigated disaster as that \$1.3 billion is currently very busy keeping a roof over 170,000 public housing households and providing most of our homelessness support services"

"Homelessness has been vanishing from the political agenda for too long, and today's announcement shows the ALP is committed to finally put it front and centre.

The ALP announcement comes just a week after Homelessness Australia unveiled its National Homelessness and Housing Affordability strategy which called for, amongst other things, investment in more short and medium-term accommodation options, renewed efforts to "close the homelessness gap" for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, action on negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions, and expanded investment in public and community housing.

"It's good to know that our political leaders are listening to the sector that is working day-to-day with the most disadvantaged Australians,"

Media enquiries: Lanie Harris, 0418 552 377