

16 August 2023

Housing Ministers' meeting welcome

Q Shelter, Queensland's peak organisation for solutions to housing need and homelessness, welcomes progress at the national level to convene housing ministers to take urgent action.

Q Shelter welcomes the news that National Cabinet has agreed to strengthen renters' rights across the country and increase the national target to 1.2 million new homes over five years.

The new target is essentially 200,000 additional homes through the introduction of a New Home Bonus program, which will provide \$3 billion in additional funding to states that deliver beyond their original agreed targets.

Q Shelter Executive Director, Fiona Caniglia, responded to the announcement: 'This puts the spotlight on our state to exceed current targets, so that Queenslanders benefit from a portion of the additional \$3 billion.

'While this funding will become available later in the cycle, it is still a positive measure as it rewards those states that are ambitious and continue to pull every lever to address housing supply in their jurisdictions. Queensland – through partnerships involving government, the private sector and community housing providers – must exceed those targets, or we will be letting down people who desperately need a home.'

At today's meeting in Brisbane, the Prime Minister and state premiers also agreed to establish a nationally consistent framework for renting that will ensure those states that have not progressed critical rental reforms catch up to the states that have been more progressive.

These include moves to ensure a requirement for genuine reasonable grounds eviction, moves towards limiting rental increases to occur only once a year in all states and territories, and phasing in minimum housing standards.

While many of these changes have already occurred here in Queensland, a consistent approach across states and territories is welcome. What hasn't been agreed is a limit on the amount rent can be increased every 12 months. This remains an area of major concern in a rental market where supply is restricted, and renters in the lowest two income quintiles face insurmountable barriers to finding, getting, and keeping a home.

Ms Caniglia said: 'It is positive that planning is on the agenda. National Cabinet has agreed to a National Planning Reform Blueprint, which deals with planning approaches, zoning, land release, fast-track approval pathways and other measures to underpin housing supply and growth. This includes a signal to phase in the introduction of inclusionary planning measures across the country, which is welcome news to the affordable housing sector, and something that we have been working towards in Queensland for decades.'

‘With a funding incentive for states to exceed existing targets, it is critical that Queensland does everything necessary to ensure we are in contention for additional funds, particularly given population growth pressures across most regions.’

‘Q Shelter looks forward to a coordinated national plan that is ambitious, sets targets for all housing types and drives accountability and success through effective funding arrangements, partnerships, and evaluation.

‘These measures are all welcome; however, we also need an accelerated national plan to end homelessness and housing need that is comprehensive, ambitious and subject to effective implementation monitoring and evaluation.’

The new social housing accelerator program that is already announced will provide a further \$398 million in capital funding into Queensland over the next two years to boost social housing supply. It is critical that this funding is delivered in partnership with community housing providers to enable them to grow supply, and improve the rate of supply, as has occurred in other states and territories.

This combination of state and federal funding puts the spotlight on the role that community housing providers can play. They must be central to Queensland Government’s strategy to deliver more social and affordable housing.

Speaking specifically about their role, Ms Caniglia said, ‘Community housing providers in Queensland are working in partnership with the State to scale up capacity to deliver more growth projects. They can also capture tax concessions, debt finance and partnership arrangements with local government to achieve significant growth in supply.’

‘Community housing providers will ensure this investment is used in perpetuity’.

‘Diversified funding streams are a game changer for Queensland, and our members will be working to make sure every dollar is maximised to house more people in our state.’

ENDS

Media comment

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