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Immediate relief is welcomed, but poverty reduction through prevention requires further attention

While the Queensland State Budget reflects a combination of longer-term reforms with immediate measures to relieve cost-of-living pressures, peak body Q Shelter considers more could have been done to target measures for people struggling the most. Diverse initiatives spanning responses to unmet housing needs, homelessness and the vulnerability of children and families, could also more clearly focus on integrated approaches to poverty reduction and prevention.

Chief Executive Officer Fiona Caniglia says, 'No doubt the Budget reflects an intent to solve and prevent entrenched challenges such as homelessness and social exclusion. If implementation succeeds, plans such as *Homes for Queenslanders* and *Putting Queensland Kids First* can have far-reaching implications for reducing poverty.

'Immediate cost-of-living relief will also be welcomed by households including families who are really doing it tough, although some measures could have been better targeted to ensure that households on lower incomes benefit the most and benefit for longer than a year.'

Q Shelter also commends:

- Recurrent increases in funding for support services to address domestic and family violence. Domestic and family violence is a significant driver of homelessness for women and children and this uplift will mean that many more people are helped at the right time to ensure their safety.
- Food security measures to address the needs of children and families
- Measures to increase homeownership such as an increased Stamp Duty threshold.

'While we understand the forward estimates for *Homes for Queenslanders* includes funding for prevention programs that will help people sustain housing outcomes, we seek to understand the extent of this investment and which regions this will benefit. With such significant spending on immediate homelessness responses, we need a plan that intentionally charts a way from crisis to sustained housing outcomes and a significant and enduring reduction in homelessness,' Ms Caniglia said.

'We also understand there is some provision in the budget for prevention models such as supportive housing. We hope this ensures the delivery of supportive housing in multiple key locations throughout Queensland. This is a model that is proven to work at achieving an end to homelessness for people who are particularly vulnerable.'

'While cost of living measures are important, Q Shelter considers that an integrated, whole of government plan to end poverty is needed. The state can play a significant role through universal services such as health, education, family support and housing. We urge the state to work with the Federal Government to achieve an integrated end-poverty approach that addresses support in the early years, food security, school retention, income support, employment pathways, improved health outcomes and a housing guarantee.'

'We are also seeking to see greater investment in modern methods of construction to rapidly and massively scale up the delivery of homes. While 600 additional homes delivered this way is a start, we

know suppliers are ready to work with government to achieve greater scale and a roadmap for this part of the construction industry to play a greater role in address housing supply side issues.

‘All in all, nearly all housing and homelessness measures had been previously announced and together with *Putting Queensland Kids First* there is a new set of opportunities to genuinely reduce adversity and hardship for vulnerable households including families with children. We need to understand more about the extent of investment in preventing homelessness. The most important opportunity is to shift from immediate and short-term relief measures to sustainable poverty reduction,’ said Ms Caniglia.

ENDS

All quotes can be attributed to Fiona Caniglia, Chief Executive Officer, Q Shelter.

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