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Sector United to Address Housing Crisis on Sunshine Coast

Members of the Sunshine Coast Housing and Homelessness Network (SCHNN) met in Nambour yesterday to form an action plan to address the emergent housing crisis and continuing homelessness in the region.

Over 40 delegates, representing all the major housing and community services, the three levels of government, community members and the private sector, attended the workshop that was facilitated by peak body, Q Shelter.

The Sunshine Coast local government area has around 1,377 applicants on the public housing register (60% of which are considered very high need), an estimated 100 rough sleepers, and as of the last census, a further 785 designated homeless persons. The region also has approximately 962 National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) dwellings, which are due to wind up soon, as the federally funded rental assistance program is discontinued.

The workshop focussed on highlighting the key issues faced in the sector including: a significant housing shortage, regulations that limit adaptable housing options, increasing homelessness and mental health presentations, and other health related factors, all amplified during the recent pandemic.

Delegates then discussed a range of possible solutions, including:

1. Increasing supply and diversity of housing product in the region
2. Greater input from the sector into planning schemes
3. Highlighting community best practice and innovation in housing solutions
4. Advocating for the continuation of the NRAS program, or an alternative rental subsidy program, to prevent exits to homelessness
5. Preventing homelessness for those exiting the justice system and [hospitals](#)
6. Better coordination across services to manage housing client referrals and transition.

From here, an action plan, to be implemented by the SCHNN network and its members, will be developed, with clear lines of communication to local councils, state and federal governments, and peak bodies such as Q Shelter.

Q Shelter executive director Fiona Caniglia said “It was very encouraging to see such collaboration from the network and a keenness to get focussed on the most important issues the sector faces and bringing solutions to the table.

“In the context of Anglicare’s Rental Affordability Snapshot showing almost zero affordable housing options for single people on minimum wages or people relying on the Disability Support Pension, and REIQ showing record-low vacancy rates (including just 0.5% on the Sunshine Coast) we are collectively calling on all elected Federal politicians in the new Government to commit to serious investment in housing solutions. The availability and affordability of housing really is a national emergency”.

“I also what time thank Tracey McNee, Lee Banfield and Darce Foley for their hard work with the Sunshine Coast network and continuing to advocate for critical support in these areas and cooperation across the sector.”

The network will meet again once the action plan has been developed, with working groups formed to provide specialist expertise and support in the prioritised areas.





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For more on the SCHHN please contact: sunshinehousingnetwork@gmail.com

For more on Q Shelter please visit: www.qshelter.asn.au

ENDS

Media opportunities for comment by Q Shelter Executive Director, Fiona Caniglia.

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