Q SHELTER

Because home matters

Q SHELTER

SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS ISSUES PAPER

October 2023

Contents

Executive summary

Q Shelter is a statewide peak organisation with a vision that every Queenslander has a home. We work to influence policy and investment solutions to housing needs and homelessness, and we build system capacity to effectively respond.

This submission sets out:

- Guiding principles
- A system-design approach to investment and commissioning
- A vision and objectives for the Plan
- Key themes and challenges
- Comprehensive recommendations across 14 themes.

This submission commends the Australian Government for progressing a national housing and homelessness plan. We propose that the scope of the plan needs to set out principles, strategies and actions that guide the role of each tier of Government, as well as the funded sector. This plan also needs to build in implementation assurance making better use of system data on need and on the delivery of solutions. This reporting needs to be frequent, transparent, accessible, and regionalised so that the regional housing and homelessness system can understand current need and the impact that integrated solutions is having.

This submission makes a strong case for shifting towards intentional system design so that all necessary elements of an effective housing and homelessness system are available and are also configured for optimal success. System and service integration that is place-based is necessary to ensure that the system delivers for vulnerable people who otherwise struggle to navigate the system and succeed in sustainably ending their homelessness.

There is widespread support among our stakeholders for also pivoting current investment away from crisis management and towards genuine prevention that sees homelessness reduced in a decade. To achieve this, specialist homelessness services need an uplift in current funding to address unprecedented demand, while tenancy sustainment programs and other prevention strategies are embedded. As the latter matures, the system should shift from crisis interventions to long-term sustainable results. This will also require careful design of protocols and practices among government agencies to ensure no exits to homelessness from government services.

Q Shelter is also widening the lens to locate housing and homelessness responses within a poverty reduction framework. The current Australian Government has raised the discussion about poverty and cost of living and if housing and homelessness strategies were underpinned by this approach, it is arguable that the results would be far more sustainable.

This submission includes several recommendations related to housing supply, land, and the planning system. We urge the National Government to set housing targets based on identified needs, which are translated by State and Local Governments. Planning system reforms and rental reforms are required and the requirement for these needs to be embedded in contractual arrangements between the national Government and the States.

To succeed, there needs to be a clearer policy framework guiding the work of community housing providers so that they can optimally leverage their assets and grow their capacity to be leading

providers of social and affordable housing in perpetuity. At present the approaches of different States is widely divergent. Consistent and optimal policy settings in addition to an industry roadmap will help to ensure the future delivery of social and affordable housing for vulnerable households.

A significant number of recommendations in this submission focus on both the Plan and on how the next National Housing and Homelessness Agreement needs to guide delivery by the States. Both instruments are vitally important as is effective governance over implementation to ensure barriers and blockages are addressed.

We emphasise the need for the plan and the new NHHA to embed the voices of people with lived experience of unmet housing needs, homelessness and of being tenants. This needs to be legitimised by the National Government and be a requirement of all future policy, investment and program delivery by States and the community sector.

Finally, we propose that the Plan's implementation is strengthen by enacting legislation that sets out a requirement to maintain a plan, and that enshrines a fundamental right to housing in Australia. The Act would require reporting and evaluation to ensure that implementation is monitored and the Plan adjusted depending on outcomes and impact.

1. Overview and context

This document sets out feedback and recommendations from Q Shelter in response to the National Housing and Homelessness Plan Issues Paper.

Q Shelter acknowledges the current context at all levels of Government with significant focus and momentum on housing challenges and the growing number of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The development of a national housing and homelessness action plan is occurring in the context of various concurrent planning and policy activities in Queensland:

- The Queensland Housing and Homelessness Roundtable and Queensland Housing Summit establish a new context in which the Premier leads multiple state agencies to plan and implement solutions to unmet housing need and homelessness
- The current Minister for Housing in Queensland is leading the process of developing a housing plan for Queensland
- Local Governments in Queensland are engaged in developing local housing action plans
- The Southeast Queensland Regional Plan review has been accelerated and sets ambitious targets for all housing including social and affordable housing
- There is engagement and commitment from multiple peak organisations across sectors who are working collaboratively to achieve housing solutions
- The next National Housing and Homelessness Agreement is yet to be negotiated and finalised
- Funding streams are flowing from the Queensland State Government and the National Government, creating growth opportunities for housing supply. The Housing Australia Future Fund and the Housing Accord are important delivery mechanisms.

These contextual factors need to be considered in designing a response to housing and homelessness challenges in Queensland:

- High net inward migration to Queensland
- Significant projected population growth
- Reducing household size driving the need for more homes
- Significant infrastructure programs attracting a workforce
- Construction industry challenges including workforce availability, skills, supply chain issues and overall rising costs
- Historically low levels of social and affordable housing which have not kept pace with population needs
- An over-reliance on the private rental market which provides little security of tenure and is also undersupplied
- Several systemic issues increasing people's risk of homelessness including exits from correctional facilities, child protection systems and health services
- Growing demand for specialist homelessness services due to an increase in homelessness and to the risk of homelessness
- A tendency to invest more in crisis responses rather than genuine upstream prevention of homelessness
- People's needs span multiple systems and navigation of these systems can be complex
- Homelessness itself is complex and 'intersects with a range of other social issues particularly poverty, income support, housing, health and access to jobs, training and education'.

- Investment in responses to housing needs and homelessness has largely unfolded in Queensland rather than being the result of careful system design.

2.   Guiding principles

It is important that a national housing and homelessness plan is guided by clear principles. Q Shelter encourages the Plan, and its implementation to embed these guiding principles:

- The Plan needs to achieve a healthy housing system where supply meets demand
- Housing supply will be diverse and well-located in high amenity areas, reflecting diverse household types and needs
- The housing system will include a range of specialised responses to address the needs of people who are vulnerable and/or impacted by lack of affordability. This will include an adequate supply of social and affordable housing.
- Genuine prevention and early intervention are important to ensure homelessness and housing stress are prevented as much as possible and if they emerge, are as brief as possible to reduce harm and trauma
- A focus on tenancy sustainment across all tenures will help prevent homelessness
- Where people have immediate needs, the system will offer an immediate response and will shift from an over-reliance on 'crisis' responses and mindset
- System integration is supported by policies and protocols among government agencies as well as place-based approaches to system and service integration. Homelessness and housing responses will be delivered by an integrated system of human services (both government and non-government) designed to ensure a dominant focus on prevention and early intervention resulting in measurable homelessness reduction.
- The relationship between specialist services and the broader human services system will be recognised and structured for success including improved housing and homelessness literacy, and enablement of other human services to support homelessness responses and sustain tenancies.
- The Plan will be evidence-based, drawing on current and emerging evidence as a basis for system design, program design and commissioning of services. This includes evidence of housing models that are proven to work and approaches to support that ensure support for duration of nee. Q Shelter embraces Housing First rather than pathway approaches that assume people need access to crisis housing when, with support, they could sustain a permanent housing solution.
- The Plan will establish mechanisms for involving and embedding advice from people with lived experience of unmet housing need, homelessness and of being tenants
- The Plan will offer 'implementation assurance' through ambitious targets, effective monitoring, and robust evaluation. The Plan's implementation will have effective governance arrangements with rigorous reporting as a basis for monitoring results and driving continuous improvements
- A broader policy context will recognise and address the need for poverty reduction as a basis for preventing and addressing homelessness and unmet housing need. This will define critical roles for national and state governments while also defining the role of the private sector, third sector and broader community

3. Ensuring a housing and homelessness system that is well-designed

Q Shelter considers it important that emerging plans at the three levels of Government combined with renegotiation of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement is an opportunity to design how the system needs to operate for success. This will include:

- Identification of key system elements inclusive of support and housing supply
- How those elements can be optimally configured to ensure people are effectively assisted and that homelessness is not reoccurring
- Data collection and reporting to understand in real time, current and emerging needs as well as the collective impact of investment.

Elements will include:

- Access points (both specialist and universal)
- Assessment tools
- Integrated case management and key support tools
- Technology assistance
- Protocols and practices that prevent exits to homelessness from institutions and improve integration across government agencies and non-government agencies
- Outreach (assertive and persistent to address homelessness and the risk of homelessness)
- Immediate response
- Ongoing support to sustain tenancies (across all tenures)
- A range of housing products including adequate supplies of social and affordable housing
- Specialised housing products to address the needs of specific population groups such as young people, older people, First Nations Australians, people with disability. We propose building supportive housing and integrated models such as Youth Foyers into every regional housing system
- Collective impact measurement by region to provide real-time data to drive system responses and continuous, timely improvements.

Research into the redesign of the homelessness service system conducted by AHURI, explored a core question about 'how the homelessness service system can be redesigned and implemented to be effective for different groups across the life course'[1]. The study examined what could be learned from national and international examples. It examined key levers across prevention, early intervention, and crisis responses. The scope considered the implications for commissioning arrangements and considered the relationship between specialist and mainstream services. AHURI also explored in depth responses to specific population groups including young people, families and children, and older people with an embedded approach across all population groups in addressing the needs of First Nations Australians.

The AHURI National Housing Conference also considered the critical importance of a healthy housing system as the optimal context for delivering specialised responses to people with additional needs for
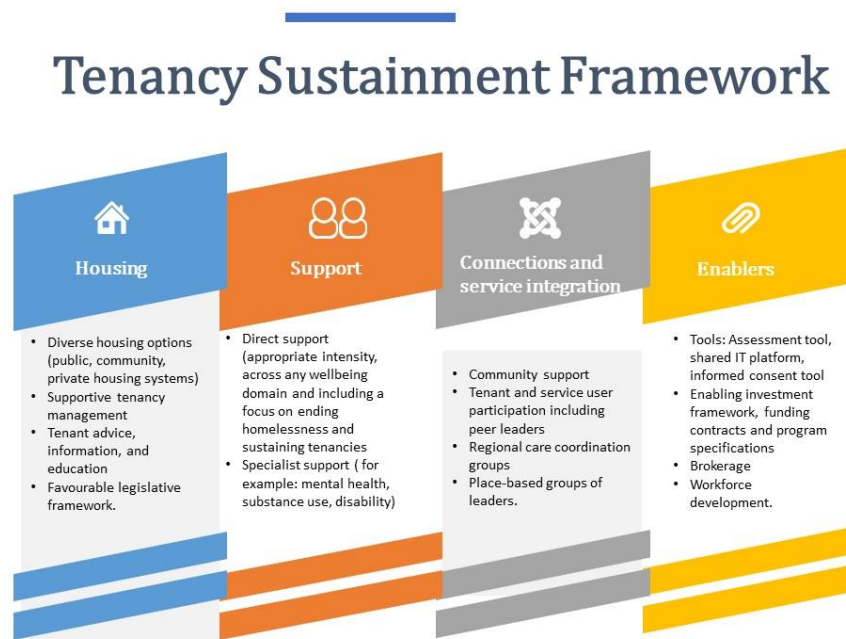
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[1] Spinney, A., Beer, A., MacKenzie, D., McNelis, S., Meltzer, A., Muir, K., Peters, A. and valentine, k. (2020) Ending homelessness in Australia: A redesigned homelessness service system, AHURI Final Report No. 347, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/finalreports/347, doi: 10.18408/ahuri5119001.

social and affordable homes and for support to sustain those homes. Q Shelter strongly encourages careful system design to ensure all housing system elements are in place and are effectively configured to achieve prevention, integration, and evaluation.

System elements will reflect solutions for housing supply, support, connections and integration, and enablers such as the workforce, technology, and brokerage.

The following diagram reflects a tenancy sustainment framework in which all system elements are well-defined. A system design also needs to reflect how these elements are configured and work together:

Tenancy Sustainment Framework

Housing	Support	Connections and service integration	Enablers
• Diverse housing options (public, community, private housing systems) • Supportive tenancy management • Tenant advice, information, and education • Favourable legislative framework.	• Direct support (appropriate intensity, across any wellbeing domain and including a focus on ending homelessness and sustaining tenancies • Specialist support (for example: mental health, substance use, disability)	• Community support • Tenant and service user participation including peer leaders • Regional care coordination groups • Place-based groups of leaders.	• Tools: Assessment tool, shared IT platform, informed consent tool • Enabling investment framework, funding contracts and program specifications • Brokerage • Workforce development.

4. Vision and objectives

Q Shelter proposes the following vision and associated objectives.

Vision

Every Australian has a home that meets their needs, and they can afford.

Objectives

To ensure a healthy housing system in which supply meets demand.

To ensure there is enough social and affordable housing to meet population needs.

To ensure the specialist housing and homelessness system is designed and delivered effectively to prevent and end homelessness.

To drive continuous system improvements through effective governance, reporting, and evaluation.

5.   Key themes and opportunities

5.1   Upstream prevention: early years, poverty reduction and housing supply

The plan needs significant focus on upstream policy settings which include:

- Upstream approaches to housing supply that ensure supply to meet demand
- Upstream approaches to supporting children and their families from pregnancy to prevent exposure to adverse events and prevent pathways into complex homelessness in later life
- An integrated, nation-wide approach to poverty reduction like jurisdictions like Ireland and Canada where poverty is defined, and integrated government agencies at all levels of government work with funded third sector agencies to achieve targets
- Improved protocols and practices among and between government services (child safety, income support, corrections, health, and mental health) to prevent all exits to homelessness.

5.2   Treat the housing crisis as a disaster

Measures to address housing need and homelessness need the urgency, focus and determination of disaster management and recovery. Australia needs to transfer the infrastructure, mindset, and capabilities from disaster management to this set of challenges.

5.3   The need for housing targets and increased investment

It is vital that Australia establishes housing targets to meet current and emerging needs for housing across all housing markets. Within an overall target will be specific targets for segments of the housing system including social and affordable housing.

Given current unmet need, investment mechanisms such as the Housing Australia Future Fund, combined with grant funding opportunities, streamlined planning, reduced infrastructure costs and other efficiency measures need to be combined to leverage all contributions towards optimal investment in social and affordable housing.

5.4   The need for scale and speed to deliver additional housing now.

The plan requires an immediate solution to significant current unmet needs. The plan needs to address these needs through immediate identification of latent housing capacity in the system while also using modern methods of construction to significantly scale up the delivery of homes now and soon.

Australia needs to embrace innovation to ensure that housing supply can be accelerated. This requires immediate engagement with enterprises capable of scaling up modern methods of construction to achieve housing supply now and soon.

5.5   Strengthening the community housing industry as delivery partners

Q Shelter proposes targets for social and affordable housing. This requires an industry road map for how this can be delivered. It is important to focus on specific implementation measures to ensure community housing providers can be scaled up to both develop and deliver this housing.

A combination of government and community sector-provided housing will see this investment deliver positive impacts in perpetuity. Q Shelter is concerned that government subsidies to the private sector delivering discounted market rent products will not deliver homes to people on lower to middle

incomes and nor will this investment be leveraged in perpetuity in a way that further supports growth in supply. The Plan needs to prevent future reductions in affordable housing through NRAS style approaches where subsidies for affordable housing are time limited.

It is important to also examine how existing portfolios of all public housing could be better leveraged through the role of community housing providers. A nationally driven policy framework and clear requirements of the States to make optimal use of all assets towards growth is essential.

5.6   Defining affordable housing

The delivery of affordable housing without adequate definition and intent to meet the needs of the lowest 40% of the income spectrum may result in an over-reliance on products that contribute little to long-term affordability. While private market affordable housing products have a role to play in a healthy housing system, it is critical that targets for affordable housing to people on low-middle incomes are underpinned by an appropriate and nationally agreed definition.

Q Shelter proposes that the definition of affordable housing needs to be 'rental housing at no more than 30% of household income for those with incomes in the lowest 40% (lowest two quintiles)'.

5.7   Housing responses that address the needs of specific population groups

The Plan needs to address the housing needs of:

- First Nations Australians
- Young people
- Children and their families
- Women.
- Older people
- People with disability
- LGBTQI+ communities

A particular focus is needed to meet the needs of First Nations peoples who represent 20% of Queensland's homeless population and are more likely to rent their homes than other Queensland households. Access to safe, affordable homes is an ongoing struggle because of serious structural impediments, enduring disadvantage and intergenerational barriers to home ownership resulting in less wealth ownership relative to others. First Nations people experience significant exclusion due to discrimination, from the private rental market[i]. The locations of many homes lived in by First Nations Queenslanders will also be at greater risk of climate impacts.

Children and young people need a particular focus in the plan. The causes and impacts of homelessness and housing insecurity at these ages causes specific and often life-long impacts. The integration with other systems such as child protection, education, family support, justice and employment are vital in addressing needs holistically with a housing guarantee.

5.8   Immediate funding enhancements for homelessness responses

As prevention is embedded in the system, it is critical that homelessness responses are better funded now. In a ten-year timescale, enhanced funding for specialist homelessness services could still be designed to be holistic and provide continuity of care while other mechanisms for prevention are embedded. With effective data reporting and evaluation, scaling up specialised homelessness services

while embedding prevention should achieve a reducing demand for crisis responses and a refocussing of investment towards sustainment in the longer term.

5.9   Enhanced and integrated support to sustain housing outcomes

Investment in homelessness solutions requires support programs to be designed with more focus on tenancy sustainment so that homelessness is prevented and so that over the long term, there is a refocussing of all investment on longer term sustainable outcomes. Support to sustain tenancies should be designed to deal with all wellbeing domains in an integrated way so that holistic support achieves more opportunities for lives to flourish. This will require a move away from crisis focussed responses, practices, and investment.

5.10   The voices of people with lived experience of homelessness, unmet housing needs and of being a tenant

A national housing and homelessness plan will embed mechanisms to ensure the voices of people with lived experience are listened to.

Q Shelter is engaged with people who have current experiences of homelessness and unmet housing needs. It is vital that the Plan unites leaders across the tiers of government and from across the housing system in agreed approaches to community change and housing growth. National leadership is needed to ensure that as housing supply is increased, and that the voices of people are included in ways that influence positive outcomes.

It is not reasonable that people with a home have louder and more impactful voices against growth and housing diversity when people with lived experience are struggling with such a fundamental human need and right. Embedding the voices of people with lived experience is also a way to ensure continuous improvements to housing and homelessness system design, policy development and program delivery.

As one example, in Canada, the National Housing Strategy included a new community-based tenant initiative that funded local organisations to support the participation of people with lived experience in housing policy and quality improvement to delivery[2].

5.11   Workforce

There is an urgent need to prioritise workforce strategies across the housing system including construction and development industries, community housing, specialist homelessness services, government, and non-government workers. A workforce strategy needs to examine skills shortages, wage levels, wellbeing, attraction, and retention.

There is also a need to subsidise and fund qualifications for the specialist homelessness and community housing sector. This includes Certificate 4 in Housing. Ongoing resources for professional development are critically important as the complexity of needs increases.

Specific strategies are needed to raise the profile of this industry to attract the broader workforce.

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[2] One example of a national housing strategy is Canada's National Housing Strategy: https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/sf/project/placetocallhome/pdfs/canada-national-housing-strategy.pdf

5.12 Address housing delivery constraints as part of the plan

Q Shelter is concerned that targets for housing supply will be reduced based on delivery constraints such as supply chain issues, rising construction costs and construction workforce challenges.

We propose that targets must address actual need while responses to implementation challenges are addressed as part of the plan. The scope of the plan needs to include strategies that address these constraints with urgency.

5.13 Integration with the wider human services sector

Homelessness and unmet housing needs are addressed by a wide range of agencies across the government and non-government human services system. Q Shelter considers the role of the wider human services sector in preventing and addressing homelessness and unmet housing needs is critical.

We suggest that the wider system could be enabled to provide effective assistance and contribute significantly to the prevention of homelessness. A well-design system will define the relationship between the broader human services system and specialist organisations.

5.14 Implementation assurance, governance, and evaluation

Q Shelter strongly proposes the need for implementation assurance that is guaranteed across the levels of government and through other delivery agencies across private and community sectors.

Monitoring the performance of the plan including transparent sharing of evidence and information through reporting will be vital to implementation success.

A range of mechanisms are suggested to ensure effective implementation:

- Enshrine the delivery of the plan in legislation that requires the national government to maintain a National Housing and Homelessness Strategy.
- This must require reporting to Parliament on targets and outcomes.
- Legislation in Australia should enshrine people's right to housing as it is understood under international human rights law.
- The legislation must require a transparent approach to reporting, monitoring, evaluation, and accountability to the housing and homelessness system, and to the community
- Establish an evaluation framework that includes comprehensive data collection and real-time reporting so that continuous improvements and collective impact can be monitored as a basis for improvements and refinements.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations address a range of matters and while some will ultimately be delivered by the States, we urge the Federal Government to ensure the Plan guides the delivery of essential policies, investment, and programs across all three levels of Government. The Plan together with the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement needs to address the following key elements to ensure successful delivery leading to a measurable reduction in homelessness.

6.1 Lead on poverty reduction

1. Locate a housing and homelessness plan within a broader plan to reduce and end poverty in Australia.
2. Consider learnings from Canada and Ireland about poverty reduction strategies that are rigorously evaluated. Also consider legislation as in the case of Canada that enshrines a definition of poverty, key responsibilities, and monitoring arrangements.
3. Adopt poverty proofing at all levels of Government to assess policies and programs when they are designed and evaluated to identify the impact, they may have on poverty including access to housing and the risk of homelessness. This should include infrastructure programs and projects to prevent displacement and rising housing costs.
4. Increase Commonwealth Rent Assistance and increase Job Seeker payments to assist more households to afford their housing costs and the rising cost of living.

6.2 A comprehensive housing and homelessness plan

1. Ensure that the National Housing and Homelessness Plan addresses the health of the whole housing system where there is adequate housing supply to meet demand.
2. Ensure that this is an integrated housing and homelessness plan that includes specific measures to prevent and end homelessness, while also supporting the health of the whole housing system. An integrated plan will also address key challenges such as the housing and support needs of specific population groups such as remote, rural, and regional communities, women, children, young people, people with disability, First Nations Australians, people who identify as LGBTIQ+, people with disability, and older people.
3. Develop a plan that provides a policy and investment framework across all levels of Government, the private sector and the wider community services sector including universal human services.
4. Ensure that Plan is reflected in the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement which sets down requirements of the States to deliver a system in which housing supply meets demand, and in which all support is focussed primarily on prevention.
5. Ensure the scope of the Plan includes specific strategies and actions to address construction industry challenges and constraints.

6.3 Homelessness responses

1. Ensure a dominant focus on genuine prevention including system elements that focus on primary, secondary and tertiary prevention[3]
2. Ensure upstream measures that invest more effectively in the early years and that prevent childhood exposure to adverse events. This should include a housing guarantee for all

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[3] **Primary prevention strategies** that address or mitigate direct causes or contributing factors to the risk of homelessness. This includes *selected group strategies* that aim to keep marginalised populations housed (e.g., those with prior criminal justice involvement), as well as indicated group strategies that target resources to those most likely to enter the shelter system (children involved in child protection systems).

Secondary prevention, or diversion, strategies that help households who are on the verge of entering the emergency shelter or crisis system to find safe alternatives and paths back to housing.

Tertiary prevention, which encompasses stabilisation services to those who have previously experienced homelessness to prevent reentry to the system.

children, with the goal of intentionally reducing the number of people emerging into complex homelessness in later life.

3. Design an effective housing and homelessness system with key elements such as immediate response, access, assessment, service integration and holistic responses across domains such as community connections, education, training, family support, health and mental health are defined.

4. Establish place-based mechanisms to integrate service delivery and to address delivery challenges and opportunities. Place-based mechanisms should operate at the front line to deliver integrated responses to housing needs and homelessness, in addition to multi-sectoral strategic leadership groups to solve regional challenges and realise opportunities.

5. Increase specialist homelessness sector funding by 25 per cent for a decade while also funding a nation-wide tenancy sustainment program to assertively work to reduce and prevent homelessness. In a decade, evaluate investment levels in immediate response as well as tenancy sustainment support as a basis for the investment framework of the future.

6. Improve system and service integration by adopting software and technology that supports multi-agency housing and support plans and integrated key support (with informed consent). This system could also help to measure a reduction in homelessness for all households assisted by region.

7. Underpin homelessness responses with a Housing First framework.

8. Expand supportive housing models to all population centres to ensure that highly vulnerable households have sustainable and affordable housing with support that is ongoing and of a level of intensity that is based on continuously assessed needs.

9. Provide additional housing subsidies to prevent homelessness experienced by young people due to lower incomes. Housing subsidies could be applied across tenures.

10. Expand funding for support programs to assist young people find, get, and keep housing across all tenures.

11. Expand the supportive housing programs across key population centres to offer integrated housing, support, education, and employment opportunities to young people (such as through the Foyer model) and other supportive housing initiatives through single sites and scattered site approaches.

6.4   Support for targets

1. That targets for all housing types and tenures are established within the Plan.

2. This should include a target for social and affordable housing to meet population needs with the goal of ensuring that social housing is at least 7.5% of all housing in Australia.

3. Ensure ongoing monitoring of housing need and housing supply as the basis for addressing implementation challenges and changes in demand for housing in real time.

4. Set targets to address reducing home ownership through a range of measures and products and ensure that these do not add inflationary pressure.

5. Set a target to reduce and end homelessness.

6.5   Strengthen the role of community housing providers

1. Develop a national industry road map with community housing providers to ensure optimal delivery of social and affordable housing.

2. Ensure a nationally agreed definition of affordable housing with a focus on ensuring the role of community housing providers in the delivery of social and affordable housing where

government investment is applied to growth in supply, in perpetuity. Q Shelter proposes that this definition is 'rental housing that does not cost more than 30% of household income for people whose incomes are in the lowest 40% of the income spectrum (the lowest two quintiles).

3. Engage the sector in opportunities to plan for a pipeline of housing over the medium-long term which in turn supports organisational growth and development due to planned scale and supply.
4. Design procurement processes to be streamlined and cost-effective, enabling organisations ready for immediate growth to be pre-approved and have certainty.
5. Require all states to have optimal and consistent policy settings to support the strength and growth of community housing providers as part of the new NHHA.
6. Work towards community housing providers playing a key role in master planned communities, priority development areas and in public housing renewal projects.
7. Expand the number of community housing providers operating not-for-profit real estate enterprises as a mechanism for improving security of tenure.

6.6   Planning system and land supply

1. That the Federal Government consider setting dwelling targets at a state level, where states track progress, using publicly available monitoring systems (e.g., Queensland's Measures that Matter), with the similar expectation that states undertake dwelling supply targets for local governments to implement, as already occurs in Queensland.
2. That the Federal Government investigate the implications of a nationwide approach to the removal of zones that allow only the construction of single family, detached houses.
3. Define the role and expectations of local governments to have planning schemes that interpret housing supply targets and that effectively and transparently report on implementation.
4. Require States to introduce inclusionary zoning through a combination of mandatory requirements, incentives, and subsidies so that all new housing of a certain scale is contributing to the supply of social and affordable housing that is well-located and fully integrated within the broader community.
5. Ensure national coordination and monitoring to identify land supply options and prioritise the inclusion of social and affordable housing on government owned land.
6. Require States to introduce uniform regulations supporting the delivery of secondary dwellings.

6.7   Housing diversity, density, and amenity

1. Ensure the Plan supports housing diversity and density to address the needs of all population groups
2. Ensure approaches to housing delivery that locate at least 70% of new housing in high-amenity areas close to employment, education, transport, trunk infrastructure and services
3. Provide national leadership on promoting the need for smaller, climate safe homes.
4. Include national investment in a broader community education campaign about the need for housing diversity and density to address community opposition to growth.
5. Lead all levels of government to unite and align in relation to housing diversity and density.

6.8 Rental system reforms

1. Require states to adopt consistent rental reforms that provide improved security of tenure.
2. Review and align Commonwealth Rent Assistance with current rental costs.
3. Extend head-leasing programs inclusive of incentives and education of private landlords and agents about the benefits.
4. Systematically restructure the private rental market to ensure institutional investment in supply inclusive of a key role for community housing providers who are already delivering build-to-rent products.
5. Ensure tax benefits and government subsidies offered for Build-to-Rent platforms are geared towards improving housing affordability, including incentivising BTR platforms to work closely with community housing providers to deliver and / or manage the affordable portion of stock

6.9 Innovations in construction methods and materials

1. Urgently convene a task force to address construction industry constraints including workforce, supply chain issues and rising costs.
2. Pre-empt the finalisation of the plan with an immediate strategy to scale up the delivery of high-quality modular homes and components that can be rapidly delivered to meet current housing demand.

6.10 Sustainability, connectivity, and liveability

1. Measures to address climate change and improve the sustainability of homes and communities need to be included in the Plan. Disadvantaged households struggle with additional costs of living due to higher car dependency, distance from transport nodes, outdated appliances, and no financial capacity to afford the cost of energy adaptations that improve the environment and reduce cost of living.

6.11 Mega events and infrastructure programs

1. The Plan needs to address potential negative impacts of mega events and accelerated infrastructure programs which may have significant gentrifying impacts and potentially displace existing populations. The potential for significant displacement of existing populations needs urgent consideration and a plan to monitor implementation and housing needs should include methodologies that monitor displacement as a basis for mitigation.
2. Similarly, the scale and acceleration of infrastructure projects should require planned housing supply initiatives to prevent impacts on local housing markets consistent with support for rural workers accommodation. Contractors and suppliers should be engaged in planning a housing response for their workforce like requirements of the mining industry.

6.12 Embedding lived experience

1. The Plan needs to require delivery agencies at all levels to establish mechanisms for meaningful involvement of people with lived experience of housing need, homelessness and of being a tenant. This needs to include opportunities to give feedback, shape policy, program design and continuous improvements to implementation.
2. Specific measures are needed to guarantee the involvement of First Nations Australians in shaping policy and investment.

3. Investment in First Nations led organisations needs to be a national priority to ensure housing and homelessness responses that are appropriate.

6.13 Workforce

1. Develop a workforce strategy for the specialist housing and homelessness sector.
2. Examine wage levels in the context of growing complexity driving the need for qualifications and skills and ensure funding is adequate to pay fair wages that help sustain and stabilise the workforce.
3. Ensure subsidised and funded qualifications for the specialist housing and homelessness sector including Certificate 4 in Housing.
4. Develop pathways for people with lived experience to work in the specialist housing and homelessness sector.
5. Ensure a workforce strategy that address construction industry challenges.
6. Where infrastructure projects are attracting a new workforce, require proponents to embed a workforce housing strategy that prevents displacement of existing populations.

6.14 Ensure monitoring, evaluation, and accountability

1. Establish legislation in Australia that requires a Housing and Homelessness Strategy to be maintained, and that requires robust reporting to the community, Parliament, and National Cabinet.
2. Establish a data framework to ensure that the performance of housing supply measures and homelessness responses is monitored and accountable. This should include data on housing demand and supply. Data publication needs to be timely and frequent to support successful implementation and real time improvements.

7. Conclusion

Q Shelter is encouraged by the scope of the draft Issues Paper and commends an approach to achieve an integrated housing and homelessness action plan. We believe this plan needs to include the role of all levels of government and include reporting, monitoring, and evaluation.

We have identified some principles and a proposed vision and objectives and explored key themes that need to be addressed.

We strongly endorse a leading, authoritative role for the Federal Government and suggest a legislative framework as being the most important way to ensure delivery and accountability. Our recommendations suggest an immediate scaling up of funding for homelessness services and tenancy sustainment support while the plan embeds prevention so that in a decade, there is scope to recalibrate the system with the dominant or exclusive focus on prevention.

We have emphasised the importance of system design. Australia cannot afford a housing and homelessness system that continues to unfold with no genuine attempt to design all necessary elements and how they effectively interact and achieve synergy and integration. The scope of these responses needs to be well-connected to the broader human services sector and every single access point for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness needs to be connected within an integrated system underpinned by evidence of what works. We propose system integration through place-based mechanisms as a vital pathway for effective delivery.

Finally, there is a critical need to locate housing and homelessness responses within a broader poverty reduction strategy. Other jurisdictions have embarked on ambitious poverty reduction strategies within which housing and homelessness responses are a key feature. If we addressed poverty more effectively, then all investment in housing and homelessness responses would be optimally leveraged for long-term results.

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On behalf of Q Shelter

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[i] Maalsen, S., Wolifson, P., Rogers, D., Nelson, J. and Buckle, C. (2021) Understanding discrimination effects in private rental housing, AHURI Final Report No. 363, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/finalreports/363, doi: 10.18408/ahuri7324501.