

22 February 2024

The Honourable Julie Collins MP
Minister for Housing; Minister for Homelessness; and Minister for Small Business
House of Representatives
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Collins

Thank you for your correspondence dated 14 February 2024 responding to our letter about funding for homelessness services in Queensland. We appreciate your update about negotiations on the future of funding beyond June 2024.

Since we corresponded with you, the Queensland State Government has announced *Homes for Queenslanders*, which includes a range of innovations, reforms, and investments which is very positive. The growing demand for services is likely to remain while longer-term strategies to achieve housing supply are implemented.

We know you are meeting soon with Ministers to further discuss funding arrangements. We are writing to reiterate our hope that the Federal Government will significantly increase funding to the States for expanded homelessness services, a greater focus on prevention services, and improved coverage of services in locations in Queensland where homelessness is growing.

In summary, some of the challenges for services in Queensland include:

- Homelessness emerging or growing in locations where there is not enough service coverage
- A system that does not have enough investment in prevention
- Increasing demand presenting to existing specialist homelessness services
- Increasing time taken to resolve people's needs because of housing market constraints and because of the complexity of needs presenting
- Workforce challenges due to funding insecurity and due to reduced well-being linked to the volume of needs, unmet needs, and barriers to achieving positive outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

These challenges are a basis for writing to you ahead of the Housing and Homelessness Ministerial Council to advocate for the following:

- That \$73 million in funding formerly provided in response to the Equal Remuneration Order is maintained and rolled into the total funding envelope for services
- That funding for specialist homelessness services and tenancy sustainment services is increased with greater scope to achieve preventative programs and outcomes
- That the total funding envelope from the Federal Government is increased based on an assessment of the increased demand for services including locations where service coverage is low and where needs are present.

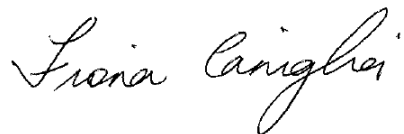
- That certainty about future funding beyond June 2024 is immediately provided so that the workforce is stable. Stable funding arrangements also contribute to the well-being of people working in our sector including front-line and managerial support roles.
- That indexation takes into account the true cost of service delivery and overall rising costs.

Q Shelter in partnership with Homelessness Queensland has just completed a survey of the housing and homelessness workforce consisting of a sample size of 450 people. The survey demonstrated that people attracted to this work are values-driven and committed but that increasing demand, more complex needs, and serious housing system challenges are all impacting the well-being and sustainability of the workforce. Funding certainty and an increase in funding to meet these needs is one way to demonstrate respect for hard-working front-line practitioners and the incredible work they are doing to help as many people as possible.

Contact

Q Shelter is available to provide further information or input if required. I can be contacted at any time to assist (fiona.caniglia@qshelter.asn.au / 0400 196 492). Q Shelter can also be contacted on 3831 5900.

Yours sincerely



Fiona Caniglia
Executive Director

cc. The Hon Meaghan Scanlon, Minister for Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works