

National Affordable Housing Summit

MEDIA RELEASE

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Time running out for an election focus on affordable housing

Heading into the last week of the federal election, a national coalition of housing and community groups has called for a stronger focus on housing affordability. The National Affordable Housing Summit coalition is led by the **Australian Council of Social Service**, the **Housing Industry Association**, **National Shelter**, the **Australian Council of Trade Unions** and the **Community Housing Federation of Australia**.

The chair of the Summit group, Julian Disney, said today:

‘Australian housing costs are dangerously high – worse than in any other developing country. Millions of households on low or modest incomes are suffering badly, often having to pay up to 50% or more of their income on rent or live very long distances away from their work.

‘Despite some important initiatives during the last three years, a great deal remains to be done if even worse hardship is to be averted and gradual improvements achieved. It is deplorable that an issue of such importance has been given so little attention by politicians and pundits during the campaign.’

The Summit group has called on Labor and the Coalition to demonstrate their concern and commitment by promising to

- **Appoint a Commonwealth Minister for Housing and Residential Development** at Cabinet level with his or her own separate Department
- **Boost the National Affordable Housing Agreement** with an extra \$1 billion per year to help provide at least 200,000 affordable rental dwellings by 2020.

The group says the main priorities for the strengthening the National Affordable Housing Agreement are to:

- **Establish an Affordable Housing Growth Fund** of at least \$500 million per year, especially to help provide more non-profit housing
- **Expand the National Affordable Rental Incentive scheme** to help attract private funding for another round of 50,000 affordable rental dwellings
- **Help State housing authorities to provide public housing** which works well for the residents and the communities in which they live.

Some housing facts:

- Rents are rising three times as fast as the CPI
- Rental vacancy rates across Australia are at historically low levels
- More than 100,000 people are homeless on any given night.

Contact: Adrian Pisarski, Chairperson of National Shelter: 0417 975 270.