



MEDIA RELEASE

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National Shelter announces policy priorities for a better and fairer housing system

Housing policy peak National Shelter has announced its policy priorities for 2018 and is calling on all Australians to join the Everybody's Home campaign to ensure access to affordable, accessible, safe and secure housing.

National Shelter Executive Officer Adrian Pisarski said that housing has now been a BBQ stopper for decades and it is past time for all levels of Government to take the issue as seriously as everyday Australians do.

“We need a National Housing Strategy and there must be a senior Commonwealth Minister to lead implementation of the Strategy and facilitate the policies, legislation, resources and engagement from all levels of government and the private and community sectors necessary to delivery such a strategy,” Mr Pisarski said.

National Shelter has announced nine policy priorities:

1. A National Housing Strategy

A National Strategy is key to bringing together all the relevant stakeholders to work constructively together to build a better housing system for all Australians.

“Nothing short of a National Housing Strategy, led by a senior Commonwealth Minister can bring together the elements required to address the market failure, the imbalance in policy and absence of cooperation between all levels of government that resist making housing affordable,” Mr Pisarski said.

2. Taxation Reform

Australia's current tax treatment of housing is part of the problem.

“We need cross party support for sustainable tax reform to remove the market distorting tax settings which have locked a generation out of ownership and rewarded the speculators instead of the hard workers.”

3. Urban and Regional Development

Affordable housing underpins workforce and community participation.

“The Commonwealth needs to leverage its infrastructure spending and support for city deals to pressure states to get their planning systems working for housing affordability as a productivity priority.”

4. Financing Affordable Housing

There is much more that can be done to facilitate investment in social and affordable housing.

“We require governments to invest in an incentive payment to meet the investment gap to produce affordable housing at scale.”

5. A fair and secure rental system

Almost one third of Australians rent their home. We must build a stronger and fairer rental system.

“Our rental systems resemble the 19th century not the 21st. The Commonwealth must lead the states to ensure renting is secure, affordable, high quality and accessible, build scale investor confidence and end the feudal relationship renters face with their landlords.”

6. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Strategy

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have very low rates of home ownership and carry a disproportionate burden of homelessness.

“Housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders requires a new 10 year strategy in remote areas and a massive boost in urban areas.”

7. National Affordable Housing and Homelessness Agreement

The National Affordable Housing and Homelessness Agreement is the key instrument between the Commonwealth and states and territories through housing and homelessness programs are delivered.

“Social Housing needs an investment approach and long term targets to lift social housing to its historic level and then to grow it to a sustainable level.”

8. Ending homelessness

On any given night, one in every 200 Australians is experiencing homelessness. We must address the drivers of homelessness and address the housing and support needs of people experiencing homelessness.

“We need to focus on prevention, early intervention and rapid rehousing of people experiencing homelessness.”

9. Housing affordability & income support reform

We cannot ignore the massive gap between housing costs and very low incomes. Commonwealth Rent Assistance must be urgently reformed.

“We have allowed Commonwealth Rent Assistance to fall far short of helping families achieve affordable rental, an immediate boost and review are required.”

National Shelter believes that each and every one of these policy priorities must be urgently address to build a better housing system for the sake of all Australians. National Shelter is a partner in the Everybody's Home campaign and urges all community members to join the campaign at <http://everybodyshome.com.au>. National Shelter's policy priority documents are available at www.shelter.org.au

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