

Urgent Call for a National Housing Affordability Plan in the Federal Budget, 2017

Australia does not have a plan to address the growing crisis of housing 'haves' and 'have nots'. This year's Federal Budget, to be released in May, provides the opportunity to adopt such a plan and to secure the much needed \$1.3bn funding for social housing and homelessness services under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and the \$117m under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH).

Shelter Tas and TasCOSS are working together with our national housing and homelessness partners to advocate for improvements to both policy and funding in response to the nation's housing crisis.

Tasmania's Growing Crisis

It is well documented that housing affordability is reaching critical levels in Tasmania, particularly for rental housing. Hobart is the least affordable city to rent in Australia after Sydneyⁱ. The number of people seeking homelessness services is increasing (rising by 7% in the year to June 2016)ⁱⁱ. The main cause of homelessness is the lack of safe and secure affordable housing. Shelter Tas and TasCOSS support the State Government's commitment to addressing housing affordability and homelessness through Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy, 2015-19ⁱⁱⁱ and continue to work with the State Government to build on and implement this Strategy.

What is Needed

This year's Federal Budget should take the first steps towards framing a long term national plan to make housing affordable and end homelessness. Along with our national partners - National Shelter, ACOSS, Homelessness Australia and the Community Housing Industry Association - Shelter Tas and TasCOSS continue to call for a national plan to co-ordinate activity and policy levers across all levels of government as the only effective way forward. Following their recent meeting with Treasurer Scott Morrison, National Shelter and ACOSS have released a 6 point plan to stem the collapse of affordable housing, '*Housing Australia's People: A Serious Plan*'. Homelessness Australia released a similar call for a national strategy in April 2017, '*A National Homelessness Strategy: Why We Need It*'. (Both documents are available at [www.shelbertas.org.au/resources/papers and reports](http://www.shelbertas.org.au/resources/papers_and_reports))

Shelter Tas and TasCOSS jointly call upon the Australian Government to:

- Develop a **National Housing Affordability Plan**, incorporating a **new National Housing Affordability Agreement** and **structural reforms** to remove distorting taxation impacts on the housing market
- **Increase the supply of social housing** through increased capital investment and the establishment of a bond aggregator financial investment vehicle^{iv}
- Guarantee **long term funding for homelessness services** (5 year funding agreements)
- **Engage with the community sector** in framing national housing policy
- **Appoint a cabinet minister** responsible for housing.

What You Can Do

Support the **#nobudgetcuts** campaign to influence this year's Federal Budget to end the funding uncertainty for our housing and homelessness services and save the much needed NAHA/NPAH funding:

Visit: www.savenpah.org/naha_petition

Tweet: **#nobudgetcuts**

Follow us **@Shelertasmania**

For more information contact Shelter Tas at info@shelertas.org.au

Who we are

Shelter Tasmania is the peak housing and homelessness body representing the interests of low to moderate income housing consumers, housing providers and homelessness services across Tasmania.

At Shelter Tas, we work to ensure that low-income and disadvantaged people in Tasmania have access to housing that is affordable, safe, secure and appropriate to their needs. We do this by working with our members - community housing providers, homelessness services providers, tenants' representatives, consumers, not for profit advocacy organisations, members of parliament and individuals.

Visit the Shelter Tas website at: www.shelertas.org.au. You can find our State Budget Submission 2017/18 on the website, which outlines priorities for addressing affordable housing and homelessness in Tasmania.

TasCOSS is the peak body for the community sector in Tasmania that works to challenge and change systems, behaviours and attitudes that create poverty, inequality and exclusion.

As the peak body for the community services sector in Tasmania, TasCOSS is focussed on representing the interests of low-income, vulnerable and disadvantaged Tasmanians to move towards a cohesive vision that is shared by the State Government, TasCOSS members and the community.

Visit the Tasmanian Council of Social Service website at: www.tascoss.org.au.

(May 2017)

i SGS Economics and Planning (2016). *Rental Affordability Index*. Prepared with National Shelter and Community Sector Banking.

ii AIHW SHS data collection

iii https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/201215/AHS_Strategy_Final.pdf

iv A vehicle that allows a number of housing providers to aggregate their debt financing needs so they can access funding from the wholesale market at a cheaper price. For more information visit:

<http://www.treasury.gov.au/ConsultationsandReviews/Consultations/2016/CFFR-Affordable-Housing-Working-Group>