

HOUSING SUMMIT – ATTENDEE INPUT

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To guide the Housing Summit discussion, we would like to hear your views on the current housing demand, what Tasmania’s housing future should look like, and what immediate actions we can take.

Please return this input with your RSVP by COB Tuesday 13 March to:

premier.invitations@dpac.tas.gov.au

CURRENT STATE

Please provide a short description of your views on the current state of housing in Tasmania:

Top three issues:

TasCOSS submits this response with the recognition that many of the tangible short term solutions relating to the immediate need of those who are homeless or lacking access to safe, affordable housing, will come from organisations with a higher level of specialization in terms of housing supply and demand. TasCOSS have therefore provided priorities and views based on the higher level areas required relating to governance, strategy, regulatory, quality and policy perspectives.

1. Over the long term, the social housing waiting list in Tasmania has remained an issue with approximately 3500 Tasmanians desperately waiting for long term, stable, safe and affordable accommodation. This will not be addressed if we do not have new approaches and different models available. We need to ensure that as access to affordable housing becomes a stress point for a broader demographic, we do not lose sight of the needs of the most vulnerable Tasmanians who have been on waiting lists for a long period of time.
2. The debt the Tasmanian government owes to the Commonwealth that is drawn down from the housing budget annually is a long term contributor to cumulative under investment in social and affordable housing. While this has been problematic over successive governments it is now having a major impact and is a key policy lever that the state government can address to free up much needed funds into the social housing budget. This long term under investment has always impacted but the more recent changes in other key elements of the housing market more broadly such as tourism/air bnb, student accommodation, population growth, employment growth in the south has meant a “perfect storm” of impact has hit. Therefore, addressing this debt must be seen as a priority and potential major contributor to both the medium and long term solution.
3. We don’t have a strong and broad evidence base of the problem we are trying to solve in terms of housing issues in southern Tasmania/Hobart and the rest of the state. We have various sector bodies willing and wanting to come to the table and contribute to understanding and solving this growing social issue. We must take this opportunity, embrace the willingness to partner, build and maintain the momentum to drive tangible actions and outcomes. This will involve reassessing the existing Affordable Housing Strategy, planning issue, impacts of City Deals etc. But if nothing else, all elements of the players that make up the housing market in Tasmania want to work together for a solution and this should not be taken lightly or lost as a great opportunity.

FUTURE STATE

Please provide a short description of what Tasmania's housing future should look like:

The future of housing for Tasmania is no different to the future of Tasmania. TasCOSS wants to see a Tasmania free of poverty and inequality, where everyone has the same opportunity. This applies to housing, employment options, education, health etc. Fundamentally, housing is the most basic human right and underpins participation and outcomes in all other areas of life – health, education, social, and employment. It is therefore the most important priority for any government to get right.

Tasmania needs an overall shared vision of our aspirations for the future to be able to articulate what the housing future should look like. This is an important overall element of how we have got to this point in terms of the current housing situation. We need leadership on who we are and where we are going as a state in order to answer this question. What is at the heart of this is the need to move away from the individual plans, strategies, policy and funding announcements and start to link together key initiatives. This includes for example, the Affordable Housing Strategy, Population Growth Strategy, Tourism Strategy, Smart City deals, UTas master plans etc. Then we can talk about a shared vision for Tasmania and the vision for housing will come from that.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Please list your top three immediate actions:

1. We need to better define the "problem" we are attempting to address and ensure the responses are within the context of the different segments that are contributing to the current shortage and affordability of housing. This in turn will ensure the immediate crisis needs of those with nowhere to live are prioritised but also capture the medium and long term actions. This will involve deeper understanding, combined data sources and predictive modelling to ensure a more robust evidence base to plan and take action.

2. Establishing a cross-sectoral governance group that can respond to the outcomes of the summit in a way that is representative of the varying segments of this issue. Government alone cannot be responsible for the solutions or outcomes, but do need to take an overarching coordinating role. Ensuring a small but representative group is established quickly will provide appropriate oversight. This may also involve moving to a central agency co-ordination approach within government which is recognition of the fact that this issue is no longer just about social housing, it is also about access to affordable housing for many who are not eligible for social housing. While the priority is for a social housing response, this is a broader housing issue and requires a broader governance and policy responses across a range of government and non-government agencies. The work that has come out of the Crown Land Audit is one example of a cross government/community/private sector approach that has quickly providing information as a result of a central agency coordinated response.

3. Being prepared to hear new ways of thinking about the short, medium and long term needs and responses is critical. We must be open to understanding this problem from multiple views and perspectives. We must be prepared to allow innovative solutions to be part of what is considered and actioned. However, sitting around this approach is the need to ensure due diligence that doesn't hinder

progress or create barriers, but does ensure risk and unintended consequences are considered in order to protect vulnerable Tasmanians.