

The Hon. Rob Stokes MP
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

24th July 2020

Re: Joint statement on NSW Housing Strategy Discussion Paper

Dear Minister Stokes,

We are a group of community services, housing and homelessness peak bodies, community legal centres, major charities and not for profit organisations. Our organisations work with people and communities experiencing disadvantage, poverty and homelessness across NSW.

We welcome the release of the NSW Housing Strategy discussion paper. A 20-year whole of government Housing Strategy will set the right policy framework for NSW to adapt to changing trends, ensure sufficient supply of well-located quality, affordable, and social housing for those unable to access or currently struggling in the private market, delivering benefits for all people and communities across NSW.

We are writing to request that there be further consultation and co-design of the NSW Housing Strategy with our sector, that the Premier's priority of reducing street homelessness be expanded to include all forms of homelessness and inadequate housing, and outline five policy outcomes we collectively agree should be front and centre of the strategy.

The NSW housing and homelessness crisis is severe. On Census night in 2016, there were close to 38,000 people experiencing homelessness in NSW, an increase of 37% from 2011. Significant numbers of lower income households face housing stress, home ownership is becoming increasingly out of reach, and the private rental market is both unaffordable and insecure. Business as usual will not work when it comes to addressing these critical issues.

Reform and innovation in complex policy areas such as housing require detailed and well-informed approaches. Prior to the release of the discussion paper we believe there was a missed opportunity for greater consultation with the community services and housing and homelessness sector. We request a commitment to further consultation and co-design of the NSW Housing Strategy, including reviewing the first draft and providing ongoing feedback. We also recommend that the Premier's priority of reducing street homelessness be expanded to include all forms of homelessness and inadequate housing, with a special focus on the largest category 'severe overcrowding'.

We support diversity of housing for diverse groups with specific needs. Our individual submissions to the discussion paper include policy and legal reform opportunities for people facing disadvantage such as young people, domestic violence survivors, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people living with disability.

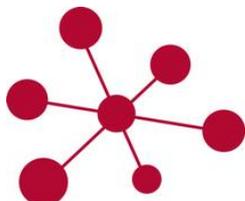
Notwithstanding our specific asks, we collectively agree that five important outcomes will need to be achieved, delivering security, affordability, stability and dignity for a broad range of people:

1. **Affordable and accessible housing for the most vulnerable:** Increase social housing and affordable housing stock adequately compared to need. We believe that at a minimum 5,000 new and additional social housing dwellings are required each year for 10 years to address the current shortfall.
2. **Inclusive growth:** Implement mandatory inclusionary zoning in all local government areas in Greater Sydney.
3. **Safe and dignified housing:** Better regulation of informal and marginal housing such as share or lodging arrangements.
4. **Secure, liveable housing regardless of tenure:** Tenancy reform, including abolishing 'no grounds' evictions and introducing energy efficiency minimum standards for rental housing.
5. **Diversity and variety of housing models:** Appropriate and supported housing models for diverse groups including; young people, domestic violence survivors, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people living with disability.

We are committed to supporting our most vulnerable in safe, stable, and appropriate housing. We welcome the opportunity to work with you and your government to implement the five policy priorities listed above, and we request that you consider each of our organisations individual submissions to this discussion paper.

We look forward to ongoing discussions and consultation.

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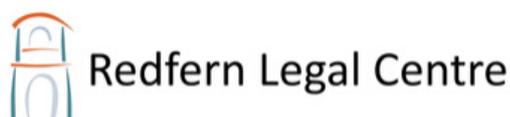


public interest
ADVOCACY CENTRE

D O M E S T I C
V I O L E N C E
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Shelter
NEW SOUTH WALES



Homelessness NSW