

Submission to DSS

On development of a National Housing and Homelessness Plan



**IMAGINE
HOUSING**

Frameworks for effective
affordable housing delivery

Statement of Expertise

[Imagine Housing](#) is an affordable Housing consultancy providing advice on effective affordable housing delivery. Imagine Housing assists clients to clarify their objectives, understand the authorising environment and institutional settings they are operating in and navigate the opportunities and constraints they face. This includes advising clients about appropriate use of housing subsidies and reporting requirements. Imagine Housing specialises in development of new and innovative affordable housing models and co-operative and collective Affordable Housing delivery.

Acknowledgment of Country

Imagine Housing acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; to Elders past and present and to any First Nations peoples reading this document.

Executive Summary

Australia's Housing system is in crisis, and the Commonwealth government has an explicit and urgent role to play in setting the framework to create an effective and efficient Housing System for Australia.

The current issues paper fails to build on decades of detailed and respected research and analysis already undertaken and does not acknowledge the importance of a whole of system response or the complex interactions that occur across the housing system.

The new National Housing and Homelessness Plan needs to provide a clear framework for integrating action and investment across the whole of the Australian housing system.

Recommendations

1. Development of the National Housing and Homeless Plan should draw heavily on the analysis and recommendations presented in [AHURI Final Report No. 401: Towards an Australian Housing and Homelessness Strategy: understanding national approaches in contemporary policy](#).
2. The Commonwealth Government should work with Stakeholders to develop a Housing Systems Outcomes Framework, clearly articulating an agreed set of outcomes sought from the Australian Housing System across the range of domains and scales the System impacts on.

Submission

Australia's housing crisis has been decades in the making. There is a wealth of existing research and analysis that lays out the extent of the issues generated by the Australian Housing System and the actions and investments that are needed to address them.

In the context of developing a National Housing and homelessness Plan, this body of existing research culminates in [AHURI Final Report No. 401: Towards an Australian Housing and Homelessness Strategy: understanding national approaches in contemporary policy](#). The Report summarises the key learnings for decades of research, places them in the current Australian political and economic context and draws together a coherent set of recommendations for a new National Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

Critically, the existing research and AHURI report 401 includes discussion of the integration between a wide range of aligned policy settings – including taxation, immigration and climate change – and the Australian Housing System. It is impossible to create an effective National Plan without understanding and addressing the full range of integrations that occur across the whole housing system.

There is little value in asking the sector to step through a new consultation process, rehashing the research and analysis that already exists and ignoring critical elements of impact. It is unlikely to provide new information or options for action, and further depletes the already limited energy and resources of a sector that has been overwhelmed for some time.

Imagine Housing strongly recommends that the Commonwealth Government take the recommendations of AHURI report 401 as the starting point for urgent action, and focus sector engagement on achieving those recommendations.

It's clear that the outcomes of our current housing system are problematic. The 'Great Australian Dream' is no longer delivering for a growing number of people. However, there's no clear agreement about the outcomes we want our housing system to deliver. Articulating desired outcomes could enable stronger community understanding of what effective intervention looks like and support effective and integrated governance arrangements required to deliver system reform.

Effective system reform requires understanding the impact changes to the housing system will have across different 'domains' and at different scales and clearly articulated desired outcomes to enable target setting and evaluation of action and investment.

Imagine Housing's Founding Director, Nicola Foxworthy, presented a 'strawman' version of a Housing Systems Outcomes Framework at the recent AHURI National Housing Conference. The 'strawman' Framework, provided at attachment 1, is offered to DSS as an example of an outcomes framework structure that could underpin effective Housing System reform.

Imagine Housing strongly recommends that the Commonwealth Government work with Stakeholders to develop a clear and agreed Housing System Outcomes Framework to underpin Housing system reform.

Attachment 1: 'Strawman' Housing Systems Outcome Framework

Outcomes	Household has:	Neighbourhood has:	Region has:	Nation has:
Housing availability	suitable housing for composition/life stage	Wide enough housing mix to support diverse communities	Ability to meet regional housing demand & eradicated homelessness Adequate supply to house regional workforce	Adequate supply to house national workforce & eradicated homelessness
Stable Housing/Quality of life	Improved social outcomes (education/health/mental health)	strong local community/s Reduce pressure on local welfare services	Improved education, health and justice outcomes	Improved education, health and justice outcomes
Built form & public realm quality (including climate change adaptation/mitigation)	home that offers; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comfort, • temperature control, • good air quality 	building and spaces that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support safety • respond to climate change 	Reduced energy demand Reduced health incidents from heat/cold/poor air quality Reduced need for heatwave/cold shock interventions	Reduced demand for utility subsidy Reduced mortality from extreme weather events

Attachment 1: 'Strawman' Housing Systems Outcome Framework

Functional communities	<p>Ability to make connections & feel part of local community</p> <p>Access to opportunities</p>	<p>Increased social capital,</p> <p>Viable local shops and services</p>	<p>Reduce need for new urban infrastructure</p>	
Finance & investment	<p>Low levels of household debt</p> <p>Can afford food, utilities</p> <p>Can afford 'decent' retirement</p>	<p>Increased disposable income</p>	<p>Capacity for investment in regional infrastructure</p>	<p>Increased funds available for productive investment</p> <p>Decrease wealth inequality</p>
Functional economy	<p>Access to local goods and services</p>	<p>Viable business options</p>	<p>Can attract relevant employees</p>	<p>Productive investment</p>
Construction Sector operation	<p>Access to relevant trades, materials as required</p>	<p>Find relevant trades, materials</p>	<p>Skills available</p>	<p>Less peaks and troughs in housing delivery</p>
Fiscal impact			<p>Less demand on concessions and affordable housing subsidy</p>	<p>Less demand on CRA, subsidy and tax exemptions</p>