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To: Department of Social Services

**Re the National Housing and Homelessness Plan Issues Paper**

Dear Madam/Sir

We are in a housing crisis. Shelter is a basic human right. The Housing and Homelessness Issues paper is well researched, but many answers to questions are self-evident and have already been answered in the document. We have chosen to respond with a summary of short- and medium-term actions.

We ask for **urgent short term**

1. **Support to individuals to prevent homelessness-** this is community dependent- it requires local consultation. We do not need a central referral point- this is just another level of bureaucracy. It would be good, however, for organisations to co locate, or to visit community centres rather than expecting people to travel to multiple offices.
2. **Assessment of existing assets.** This includes consideration of models such as those discussed in the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited document on alternative housing models. It included:
  - o Siting demountable housing for the next ten years in areas which are designated for future development.
  - o repurposing of government owned land or buildings in central business areas. <sup>1</sup>

The Sunshine Coast Council is currently debating extending the approval for tiny homes to 18 months. This is patently inadequate to address the current need and should be at least 5 years.<sup>2</sup>

**3. Trials of meanwhile use options.**

In Nambour, a developer has allowed Coast to Bay Housing and the Salvation Army to manage a property for the next 18 months before the site is developed. They are doing so with community support. Surely there are a hundreds of properties in this category.

4. **Consideration of increased occupancy-**We support the review of regulation and zoning models to support increased occupancy, gentle density and planning to include transport options at the time of development. We also support subletting of part of a property to tenants for first homeowners without loss of their first homeowners subsidy, so long as the first home owners are also in residence.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/sites/default/files/documents/2022-05/AHURI-Final-Report-378-Alternative-housing-models-for-precariously-housed-older-Australians.pdf> p 22.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/news/your-property-can-help-someone-needing-a-home>

## Medium term actions must include

1. **Action to require diversity in housing types**- so that developers offer and build a number of different housing types to cater for single people and families. This includes group housing for people with similar needs (eg intellectual disability, women over 50). Models such as Project Independence in Canberra<sup>3</sup> and the Older Womens Housing Project are examples. <sup>4</sup>
2. **Future housing models with specific attention to**
  - a. **Amenity**- including access to green space, community engagement, shopping, sporting options and public transport.
  - b. **Safety**- with the aim of being able to walk and travel safely (walking riding and driving) in the community. This includes public transport, lighting, footpaths, and well-lit public spaces. The public consultation process being undertaken in NSW is a great example.<sup>5</sup>
  - c. **Diversity** Options that house people with a variety of backgrounds within the same suburb including
    - i. Low-income earners
    - ii. Single people who require or may choose to share group housing.
    - iii. Older people who require or choose to live in their community as their needs change.
    - iv. People with special needs such as those with challenging behaviours – specific housing models are needed here. Too often these people languish in totally unsuitable settings such as hospitals or nursing homes.
3. **Flexible ownership options**- A mix of models including build to rent (eg Nightingale housing<sup>6</sup>, Older Women's Housing Project<sup>7</sup> ), owner occupied and public housing options.
4. **Transport**- We are keen for accessible public transport rail options for the Sunshine Coast. Planning through the Sunshine Coast Council is welcomed.

## ***How will we know that the plan has delivered?***

We have used Government as an inclusive term to encompass local, state and federal agencies. We are looking for evidence that

1. Urgent (within 6 months) solutions have been implemented to provide interim housing. This includes use of demountable housing and meanwhile use.
2. Governments have implemented funded supports to people who are at risk of homelessness and to support people who find it difficult to maintain tenancies.
3. Communities are being consulted with at the level of residents, not just the local government.
4. Governments are making a significant investment in social housing which is built with regard to amenity and safety and welcomes to people from a mix of socio-economic backgrounds.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://projectindependence.com.au/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://wpi.org.au/older-womens-housing-project/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/industry/cities-and-active-transport/cities-revitalisation-and-place/festival-of-place-0>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nightingalehousing.org>

<sup>7</sup> <https://wpi.org.au/older-womens-housing-project>

5. Government incentives are used to partner with families to share the cost of home ownership.
6. The Government is brave enough to try models which are suggested by the community, and which address the needs of varying groups.
7. Government regulates for a mix of housing options (stand alone, shared, gentle density) and mandates increased density or renewal of housing rather than urban sprawl.
8. Residents can travel on foot, by bike or on public transport in safety to access shopping centres, community centres and schools at any time of the day.
9. Communities have street trees and sufficient green spaces as well as gathering places for people of all ages.

Thank you for considering this response.

Yours sincerely,

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Zonta Club of Caloundra City Inc.  
4/10/23

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