



National Housing and
Homelessness Plan

Our Housing and Homelessness Plan

What we heard from the community



Easy Read version

How to use this report



The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) wrote this report.

When you see the word 'we', it means the Australian Government.



We wrote this information in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold
Not bold

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



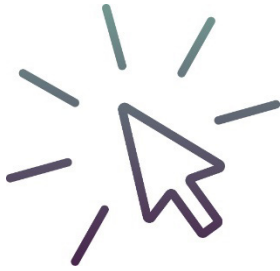
We explain what these bold words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 45.



This is an Easy Read summary of another report.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other report on our website.

www.engage.dss.gov.au/developing-the-national-housing-and-homelessness-plan/developing-the-national-housing-and-homelessness-plan-summary-consultation-report



You can ask for help to read this report.

A friend, family member or support person might be able to help you.



We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the land we live on – Australia.



They were the first people to live on and use the:

- land
- waters.

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About this report

Many Australians face housing challenges, including:



- finding a place to live



- being able to afford a place to live.



And many Australians deal with **homelessness**.

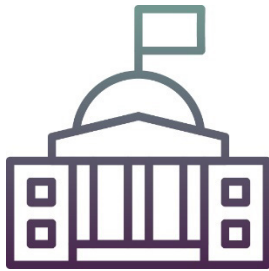


People who are homeless do not have a home.

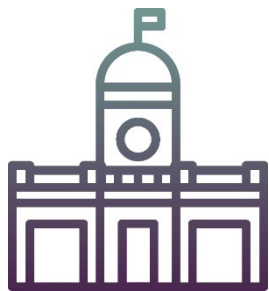
They must find a place to sleep each night, and these places are not always the same.

We say 'homelessness' when we talk about the experiences of these people.

All levels of government must work together to fix these issues, including:



- state and territory governments



- local governments



- the Australian Government.



Governments also need to work with:

- organisations
- housing services
- experts on housing and homelessness.

The National Housing and Homelessness Plan



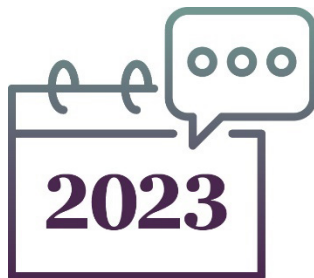
Governments are working together to create a plan to support all Australians to get:

- safe housing
- housing they can afford.



We call it the National Housing and Homelessness Plan.

In this report, we just call it the Plan.



In 2023, we asked the community what they thought our Plan should focus on.



When we talk about the community, we mean:

- people
- organisations.



In this report, we explain the ideas the community shared with us.

Who we heard from



We heard **1,708** ideas from the community.

We heard from people who have experienced:



- homelessness



- **family and domestic violence.**

Family and domestic violence is when someone close to you hurts you, such as:



- your partner
- a member of your family
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.

We heard from people who:

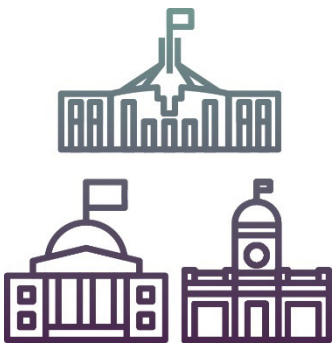


- have a disability
- know what life can be like for people with disability
- can tell their story to help others.



We heard from many people with different backgrounds and beliefs.

We heard from:



- governments



- experts on housing and homelessness.

We also heard from:



- housing organisations



- homelessness services.



Homelessness services help people who are:

- homeless
- at risk of being homeless.

What we heard from the community



The community shared that the Plan should aim to end homelessness in Australia.



They also shared that the Plan should try to stop homelessness from happening in the first place.

And not just manage it when it does happen.



We also heard that the Plan should support all Australians to afford safe housing.

People shared that housing should be **inclusive**.



When housing is inclusive, everyone:

- can take part
- feels like they belong.



It also means that housing can support what everyone in the home needs.

For example, it includes ramps if people need them.



The community shared that people should feel safe and secure about where they live.



We heard that people who own housing should respect the **rights** of the people who live there.

Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.



The community shared that housing should not hurt the environment.



And housing **policies** should last a long time and not change much.

Policies are plans for how governments should do things.



People shared that everyone should get the same treatment when they:

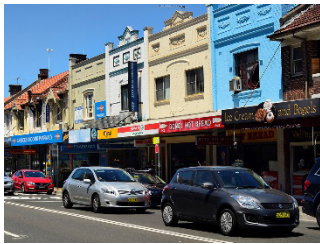
- try to find housing
- get housing.



We heard there should be more **accessible** housing.

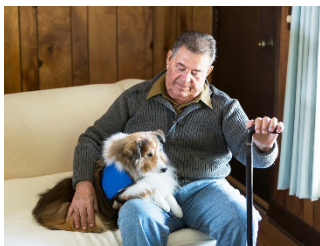
When housing is accessible, it is easy to:

- find and use
- move around in.



It also means that housing is connected to the parts of the community that people need.

For example, it is close to shops.



Accessible housing is especially important for:

- people with disability
- older people.



We also heard that housing should work well for everyone, no matter what their backgrounds or beliefs are.



This includes people who need different things.

For example, some people have large families.

It's important that their homes are comfortable for everyone to live in.



People shared that services that help people find and use housing should include more support services.

For example:

- mental health support
- job training.



We heard that governments and organisations should work together to improve housing.

This includes the organisations who own and build housing.



The community shared that everyone should use new ideas to manage housing and homelessness.

This includes governments and organisations.



We heard that **funding** should work better to:

- create new housing
- make housing better
- support people experiencing homelessness.



Funding is money from the government to pay for services.



Funding can also come from organisations who are not part of the government.

For example, banks.



We also heard that people should know more about housing and homelessness.



This includes:

- the community
- people who make policies.

What young people shared



At a meeting in Hobart, young people shared ideas about what they want for housing in Australia.

They shared that everyone has the right to:



- live in a safe home



- feel respected when they use support to find housing.



They also said that communities should be:

- safe
- connected with the people who live there.

Principles to guide the Plan



People shared ideas about the **principles** that could guide the Plan.

Principles are important ideas everyone should always think about.



There were **12** principles that came up a lot.



1. Everyone should be able to afford housing



2. Everyone should be able to get housing, regardless of who they are



3. Housing is a basic right



4. Housing should be accessible for everyone



5. Housing should be good for the environment

This also means that housing should last a long time.



6. People should get housing straight away

They shouldn't have to meet certain rules first.



7. Housing should be safe

This means that services for people experiencing homelessness should also be safe and treat people with respect.

8. When we make new programs and services, we should work with people who:



- have experienced homelessness
- have been at risk of homelessness
- know what life can be like for people who experience homelessness
- can tell their story to help others



9. Policies about housing should be inclusive

This includes understanding what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities want.

10. All levels of government need to work together to make sure the Plan works well



This includes:

- state and territory governments
- local governments
- the Australian Government.



11. Services should focus on what each person needs when they provide housing and homelessness support



12. Make sure there is funding for housing and homelessness support

Our 7 focus areas



We asked the community about **7** important areas that the Plan could focus on.

We call them our focus areas.



1. Homelessness



2. Homelessness services



3. Social housing



4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing



5. Affording somewhere to live



6. Using land for housing



7. How climate change affects housing



We asked the community what they thought about our **7** focus areas.



On the following pages, we explain:

- what each focus area is about
- ideas the community shared to improve each focus area.

1. Homelessness

Challenges in this focus area

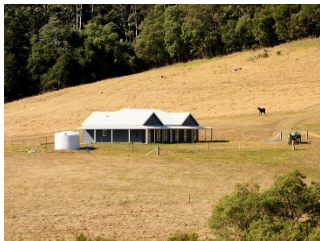


The community shared that it is hard for people to find and use housing they can afford.



We heard that it is getting more expensive for people to buy things they need, like food.

And this makes it harder for people to afford housing.



The community also shared that there isn't enough housing in places far away from cities.

Ideas to improve this focus area



The community shared that people should be able to get safe housing straight away if they need it.



And people should be able to:

- stay there for a long time
- get support while they live there.



The community also shared that the Plan should focus on supporting all parts of Australia to:

- work together
- and
- stop homelessness.



We heard there should be funding for people who are at risk of homelessness.

This funding should support them to pay **rent**.



When you rent a home, you pay to live in a home someone else owns.



We also heard that the Plan should help communities to:

- understand homelessness better
- improve the way people think and feel about homelessness.

2. Homelessness services

Challenges in this focus area



The community shared that there isn't enough funding for homelessness services.

The community also shared that there isn't enough housing to support people who need:



- housing in an **emergency**



- somewhere to live straight away.



An emergency:

- is a dangerous situation
- is a thing we don't expect to happen
- can put our health and safety at risk.



We heard that housing where people stay for a short time can be unsafe.



For example, there aren't places to:

- cook
- shower
- do laundry.



We also heard that it can be hard for homelessness services to work well together.

And this can affect people who need to move from one type of home to another.



For example, if a person needs to move from an emergency home to a home they can stay in for a long time.

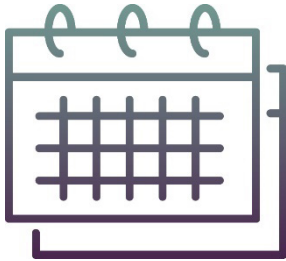
Ideas to improve this focus area



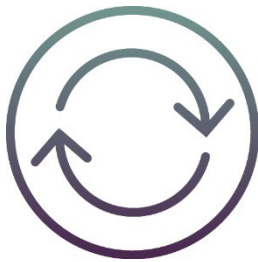
The community shared that homelessness services should support people:

- to feel safe
- based on what they need.

The community also shared that funding for homelessness services should:



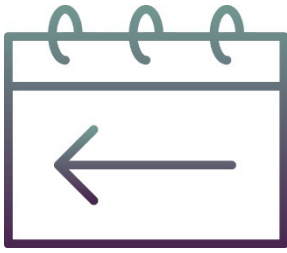
- last longer



- be able to change to support what people need.



This includes if lots of people suddenly need support, like during bushfires or floods.



We heard that the Plan should focus on supporting people before they are homeless.



We also heard that there should be more training for people who deliver homelessness services.

This includes in places far away from cities.



People also shared that there needs to be better **data** about homelessness, so we know how to stop it.

When we talk about data, we mean:



- facts
- information
- records.

3. Social housing



Social housing can support people who are:

- homeless
- at risk of being homeless.



It provides homes for people who can't afford to rent or buy a home on their own.

Challenges in this focus area



The community shared that there isn't enough social housing.

In some places, people need to wait 10 years before they can get social housing.



The community also shared that social housing is often not safe to live in.



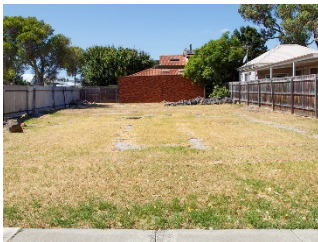
We heard that funding to help people pay rent doesn't always work well.

This can happen because the people who need support don't meet rules about who can get funding.



We also heard that there needs to be more types of social housing.

For example, social housing for people with disability.



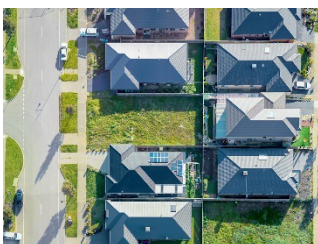
People shared that there are places where people could create more social housing.

This includes buildings and land that people aren't using.

Ideas to improve this focus area



The community shared that governments need to have plans to build more social housing.



The community also shared that when people build lots of homes on an area of land, they should make space to build social housing.



We heard that governments should set goals with people who provide housing.

These goals should include building:

- more social housing
- better social housing.



They should also:

- work together to reach these goals
- collect and share data about these goals.



We also heard that there could be social housing for young people at risk of homelessness.

And this would help to stop homelessness before it happens.



The community shared that people who provide housing should get more funding to create social housing.

4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing

Challenges in this focus area

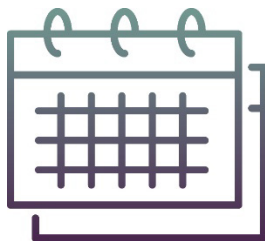


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people shared issues they face with social housing.

They told us:



- there isn't enough funding



- they need to wait a long time to get social housing

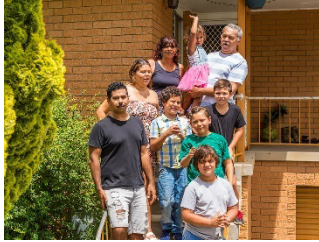


- it's hard to work with the government to get the social housing they need.



We heard that the rules for housing don't work well for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

For example, the rules don't think about how important it is for someone to live on their traditional land.



We also heard that it is normal for many family members to live in one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander home.

This can lead to **overcrowding**.



Overcrowding means your home doesn't have enough space for everyone who lives there.

4



Overcrowding can be another type of homelessness.

This happens if a home needs at least 4 extra bedrooms for everyone to have enough space.



People shared that when there is overcrowding in social housing, social housing workers ask some people to move out.

These people might have nowhere to go.



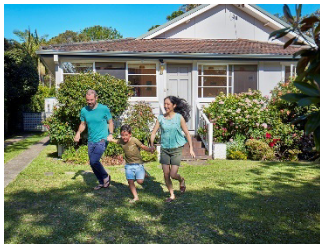
People also shared that what overcrowding means needs to change.

Because sometimes people want to live with all of their family members.

Ideas to improve this focus area



We heard that there needs to be more funding for housing organisations that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people run.



We also heard that housing should work for what each community needs.

For example, housing could have large indoor and outdoor areas for families to gather.



People shared that the rules for housing should be easier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to follow.



People also shared that communities should lead their own projects.

This will help each community create housing that works for them.



We heard that we could make another plan just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



It could focus on housing and homelessness issues that affect them the most.

5. Affording somewhere to live

Challenges in this focus area



We heard that it is too expensive to buy and rent homes.

There's a big gap between how much money:

- people earn
- homes cost.



We also heard there's not enough housing that:

- people can afford
- has what people need.



The community shared that many people see housing as a way to make money.

And not as something everyone needs.



The community also shared that some people rent out extra homes they own.

But only for people to stay in for a very short time.



And this means there are less homes for people to live in.

Ideas to improve this focus area

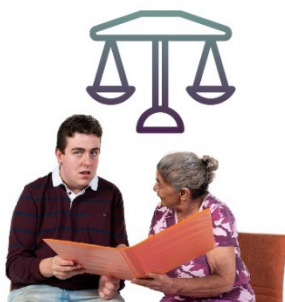


People shared that there should be better rights for people who rent homes.

This would help protect these people to live in homes:



- they can afford
- for a longer time
- that are comfortable.



We heard that people who rent homes should be able to easily learn their rights.



The community shared that:

- there should be more funding for people to rent and buy homes
- it should be easier for people to get this funding.



The community also shared that governments should make new policies to help:

- house prices go down
- stop house prices from going up.



We heard that the rules about building homes should change, so people can build more of them.

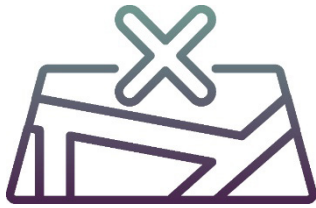


We also heard that communities should lead projects to build and manage homes.

This could lead to more accessible homes for people with disability.

6. Using land for housing

Challenges in this focus area



The community shared that there isn't enough land for people to build homes on.



And building homes takes too long.



We heard that local laws make it hard to increase how many homes can be in an area.



We also heard that people who build and sell homes don't always make the types of homes that the community needs.

Ideas to improve this focus area



We heard that communities should have a say in the homes people create.

This could also include people:

- with different experiences and backgrounds
- who work in areas like health and transport.



We also heard that it is important to connect housing with things people need.

For example:

- transport
- jobs
- services.



People shared that the Australian Government and state and territory governments should change laws about:

- how many homes people can build in an area
- what land people can build homes on
- what people can use the land for.



The community shared that new buildings should be:

- accessible
- inclusive.



The community also shared that people with disability should have a say in making these new buildings at every step.

7. How climate change affects housing



Climate change is when weather patterns change over a long time.

It can happen when people don't look after our natural environment well.

Challenges in this focus area



The community shared information about the effect that natural disasters have on housing.

For example, bushfires and floods.



The community also shared that after a natural disaster, people must find housing straight away.



They might also need to find long-term housing if they can't go back to their homes.



People shared that there isn't enough funding to build or change houses to be safer in natural disasters.



We heard that the rules about building new homes don't make sure that they are safe in natural disasters.



We also heard that people who make less money are more at risk of natural disasters affecting their homes.

Ideas to improve this focus area



We heard that people should get safe housing straight away after a natural disaster.



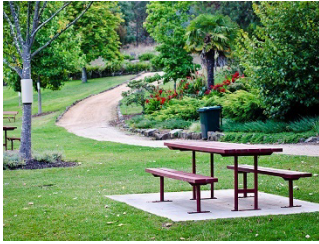
We also heard that governments should encourage people to have homes that use:

- less energy
- energy that is better for the environment.



This would bring the cost of energy down.

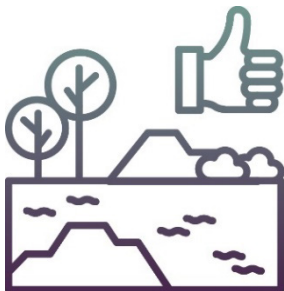
People shared that communities should have more:



- green spaces, like parks and gardens



- ways to get around that don't use a car, like bike paths or trains.



This would bring down how much communities affect the environment.



We heard that people need to think about the risks of natural disasters when they build new homes.

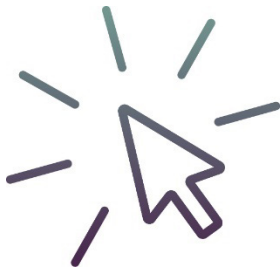


We also heard that people need to know how they can make their homes and communities better for the environment.

Contact us



You can contact us for more information about the Plan.



You can visit our website.

www.engage.dss.gov.au/developing-the-national-housing-and-homelessness-plan



You can send us an email.

HousingandHomelessnessPlan@dss.gov.au

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



Accessible

When housing is accessible, it is easy to:

- find and use
- move around in.



Climate change

Climate change is when weather patterns change over a long time.

It can happen when people don't look after our natural environment well.

Data



When we talk about data, we mean:

- facts
- information
- records.

Emergency



An emergency:

- is a dangerous situation
- is a thing we don't expect to happen
- can put our health and safety at risk.

Family and domestic violence



Family and domestic violence is when someone close to you hurts you, such as:

- your partner
- a member of your family
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.



Funding

Funding is money from the government to pay for services.



Homelessness

People who are homeless do not have a home.

They must find a place to sleep each night, and these places are not always the same.

We say 'homelessness' when we talk about the experiences of these people.



Homelessness services

Homelessness services help people who are:

- homeless
- at risk of being homeless.



Inclusive

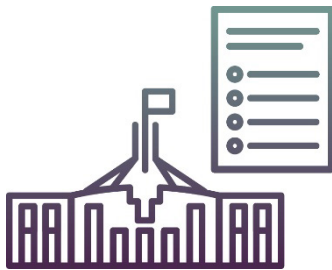
When housing is inclusive, everyone:

- can take part
- feels like they belong.



Overcrowding

Overcrowding means your home doesn't have enough space for everyone who lives there.



Policy

Policies are plans for how governments should do things.



Principles

Principles are important ideas everyone should always think about.



Rent

When you rent a home, you pay to live in a home someone else owns.



Rights

Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.



Social housing

Social housing provides homes for people who can't afford to rent or buy a home on their own.



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