

20 October 2023

Australian Government Department of Social Services
National Housing and Homelessness Plan Team
HousingandHomelessnessPlan@dss.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Developing the National Housing and Homelessness Plan - Issues Paper on Housing and Homelessness in Australia

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Issues paper on Housing and Homelessness in Australia as part of developing the National Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Eurobodalla Local Government Area in regional NSW experiences growing pressure on the supply and affordability of suitable housing. We understand this is a complex issue and Eurobodalla Council advocates for systemic change and support for strategic planning of towns to facilitate infill development and master plan land release areas. This will facilitate the types of developments needed to address housing affordability and security, without compromising good urban design and planning principles or environmental impacts.

Eurobodalla is experiencing increasing homelessness including people living long-term at Council's low cost, primitive camping grounds. In parts of Eurobodalla, expected waiting times for social housing are over 10 years. The supply of emergency accommodation is diminishing and there is a very limited supply of long-term social housing – if homeless people come into the system, they face being moved from emergency accommodation to emergency accommodation every couple of months.

We welcome the recent Federal grant opportunities offered by the regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (rPPP) because smaller regional councils often do not have the rate base, capacity (human or financial) to be active in this space to the same degree as the metropolitan councils.

We urge that the National Housing and Homelessness Plan includes actions for:

- **More social and affordable housing delivered by Government:** Direct financial involvement by the Federal and State Governments to support the provision of social and affordable housing by government or in partnership with not-for-profit organisations. This should also consider the need for transitional, supported, and temporary accommodation.

- **Financial incentives and certainty for affordable housing developments:** Incentivise delivery of quality affordable housing (e.g. tax, stamp duty relief) under appropriate contractual arrangements to the private sector where they provide affordable housing solutions as part of their development. While temporary arrangements are useful in some circumstances, Government should support programs that result in affordable housing in perpetuity to address the growing need. Work with the finance sector to address lending issues and uncertainty for developers when trying to finance development in regional areas. Provide financial incentives and easier avenues for facilitating existing dwellings to come into the social housing system. For example, Eurobodalla Council wrote to ratepayers, with NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) advising that they added around 10 additional properties to the headlease for our area. When compared to how long it would take to build 10 houses, this was a good outcome and could add to the options mix provided by government.
- **Mandated delivery of key worker housing as part of all major projects:** Consider local housing needs as part of the planning/delivery cycle of major capital works projects (e.g. bridges, hospital, bypass) and provide housing to meet demand of workers and then at end of project the broader needs of the community through provision of affordable or social housing managed through not for profits or government programs.
- **Resourcing Local Government:** Direct funds to local government to fund strategic planning work (housing strategies, master planning, development control plans etc) and the human resources to develop and implement them, that will assist in the provision of residential land and housing to meet the needs of the community.
- **Tax and planning reforms that address the root issues:** Planning process and controls should support innovation and the flexibility required to provide the right outcomes for each community. Look at reforms that 'front end' the planning system to deliver greater certainty to the community and developers while enabling the delivery of housing to be more efficient and responsive to market shifts and more affordable.

Should you require further information, please contact me phone [REDACTED] or via email [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely
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