A fair deal for all Australians

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

As Australians, we hold that
• every Australian has the right to a home
• adequate housing is a basic human need,
• adequate housing is a fundamental human right (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, No.25).

We hold that affordable, appropriate and secure housing, which offers safety, privacy and reasonable security of tenure, is fundamental to adequate housing provision.

We hold that access to quality, affordable housing, which includes accessibility to transport, employment and community services, is central to community well-being, and provides a foundation for family and social stability.

We hold that appropriate housing contributes to improved health and educational outcomes, as well as to a productive workforce.

We hold that the role of Government is critical in ensuring that the housing rights of people are met, particularly for those on low incomes and those with special needs.

We hold that the right to a home is basic to the Australian belief in a fair go for all.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

2016 Budget
The Turnbull budget has largely ignored the issue of housing affordability. There is no increase to public housing funding, no increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance, no new money for rental affordability incentives, and no new financing option for affordable housing. There is no response to the Senate inquiry into housing affordability or reform.

Housing Affordability
Housing is the major cost facing every vulnerable household, and the 2016 budget offers no relief. Less than 0.1 % of rental properties are affordable for a single person on Newstart or Youth Allowance.

Housing Stock
There is an insufficient supply of affordable housing available for purchase throughout Australia.

Housing Stress
The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that almost one million households are now living in rental or mortgage stress, i.e. are paying more than 30% of gross income on recurrent housing costs.

Homelessness
Federal budget cuts to homelessness services, mental health programs, community legal centres, women's refuges and youth shelters will be hit hard by the axing of a $115 million program aimed at addressing the needs of over 100,000 homeless Australians.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

In the past fifty years, Australia has moved from a society where housing was seen as a universal right, to one where it is now predominantly viewed as a safety net for those most in need.

Cutbacks in Commonwealth and state funding have led to increased rental and mortgage stress, and a reduction in the number of services to assist those suffering financial stress, and domestic and family violence.

Social problems (violence, financial insecurity, unemployment, underemployment, delinquency, marriage breakdown, infirmity and old age) have been shown to be aggravated by the lack of, or inadequate, housing.

We know that the negative impact of inadequate housing has exacerbated the need for spending on health, prisons, and welfare provisions. In many large housing estates, the lack of support systems has resulted in significant instability.

Governments have named domestic violence as a significant cause of homelessness, yet have failed to provide affordable housing to alleviate the problem. Refugees are made up increasingly of women and children (also victims of domestic violence) and youth (unemployed, gay and lesbian, drug addicted).
WHAT CAN WE DO POLITICALLY?

Housing will continue to be a critical issue, whichever Party wins power. Unless all candidates accept that housing is fundamental to a civil society, it will continue to be a growing financial and social burden for the whole community.

WE CAN LOBBY CANDIDATES:

to commit to realistic levels of funding for housing, regardless of other calls made on revenue

To commit revenue to create new, purpose-built, safe, affordable accommodation for vulnerable people, and especially the elderly, and disabled, victims of domestic violence, homeless indigenous Australians, and those suffering from mental health issues.

to develop new models of cooperative housing for low-income households

To increase the level of social housing and upgrade existing stock

To provide funding for public and community housing, and incentives for the development of affordable housing in the private market

To implement rent-setting in community housing, targeting low-income households and to increase rent allowance in areas of need

To legislate to guarantee adequate protection (tenants and landlords)

To invest in emergency housing for those experiencing severe stress

WHAT CAN WE DO PERSONALLY?

We can share ideas with our own community.

We can work with like-minded groups.

We can investigate possibilities in our area of influence and action.

We can raise awareness of housing issues by inviting community and social housing advocates and practitioners to speak with us.

We can advocate with religious and community groups to investigate housing possibilities within their own sectors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Shelter NSW: www.shelternsw.org.au

ACOSS: www.acoss.org.au

Churches Community Housing: www.churcheshousing.org.au

St Vincent de Paul Society: www.vinnies.org.au

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council www.acsjc.org.au

With the bricks of tolerance
We will build together a better world.

With the bricks of belonging
We will build together a better world.

With the bricks of understanding
We will build together a better world.

With the bricks of sharing
We will build together a better world.

With the bricks of hope
We will build together a better world.

With the bricks of community
We will build together a better world.

With the bricks of love
We will build together a better world.

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NetAct


Your voice strengthens our voice