

POSITION STATEMENT 2013



HOUSING FOR A DECENT LIFE

What Australia needs

Let's build a society in which people experiencing housing stress and homelessness can access and retain appropriate housing. Shelter is recognised throughout the world as a basic human right. Housing satisfies our essential needs for shelter, security and privacy. The adequacy of housing is also an important component of individual and family well-being. Let's increase the availability of alternative social and affordable housing and increase support for those with complex needs, so that they can better access and maintain secure and affordable housing.

Why it matters

There are currently 105,000 people in Australia who are homeless.

Homelessness is not just the result of too few dwellings. Its causes are many and varied. Domestic violence, a shortage of affordable housing, unemployment, mental health issues, family breakdown and drug and alcohol abuse all contribute to the level of homelessness in Australia.

Homelessness is not a choice. People who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness can be disconnected from employment and education institutions, be socially excluded from support networks, and are more likely to experience poorer physical and mental health.

Housing demand and construction also have great significance in the national economy, influencing investment levels, interest rates, building activity and employment.

For a child, homelessness means missing out on many of the things that other children take for granted – having a friend over to your house after school is impossible if you don't have one. Homelessness may also mean poor school attendance, or missing out on excursions and new uniforms. It can become increasingly difficult to stay engaged in education.

We believe every person has the right to access a decent standard of living. By investing in the things that matter we can build a stable and sustainable society. Australia can and should be a just and harmonious society where everyone can experience belonging in a safe and supportive community, has the education and work opportunities to participate and contribute, and has adequate food, clothing, healthcare, recreation and housing.



What Government can do

Ensure that the support services required for disadvantaged people are adequately resourced and delivered collaboratively across service domains.

Develop incentives for people to invest in private rental accommodation at the lower end of the housing market, including tax incentives. This would be enhanced with the expansion of the National Rental Affordability Scheme, or similar.

Work closely with State and Territory Governments to reduce red tape holding up supply, particularly in relation to planning/development issues.

Work towards agreement across all levels of government on social housing policy and regulation so that there is certainty and security of tenure.

Reinstate and fully resource the Housing Affordability Fund to lower the cost of building new homes by tackling the critical supply side issues of the length of time taken to bring new houses to sale and the impact of infrastructure charges.

Increase the supply of land for housing by releasing surplus Commonwealth land for residential and community development.

Extend the 'A Place to Call Home' initiative, building new houses for homeless Australians.