

National Housing and Homelessness Plan

– yourtown's advocacy submission



What is it about?

The Australian Government (Department of Social Services) is developing a National Housing and Homelessness Plan in collaboration with state and territory governments. The Plan will be a 10-year strategy. It will set out a shared vision to inform future housing and homelessness policy in Australia. The Plan will set out the key short, medium and longer term reforms needed to address housing challenges.

Why is it important?

Access to housing is a basic human need, and a fundamental human right. Yet in Australia, we remain gripped by a national housing affordability crisis that is rapidly worsening. There is still no cohesive national approach to addressing the problem and/or underpinning drivers of disadvantage that are barriers to accessing affordable housing.

Some of **yourtown's** key messages:

1. The need for national reform

The Plan needs to set a true agenda for national reform, which is mirrored in state and territory plans and the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement. It is critical that the next National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (due in July 2024) between Federal and State/Territory governments drives a truly national approach for reform. State based plans should be required to align with the national approach, rather than the current proposal of having a national plan retrofit to fill in gaps in individual state/territory approaches.

2. Those with lived experience need to drive the design of the plan

yourtown strongly recommends the Government use human-centred design and undertake co-design approaches in development of the Plan with people with lived experience. People, including young people, who are impacted by housing instability and homelessness or those who need homelessness services should be genuinely engaged in the design of a system and services so that it is designed to address the challenges they face and meets their needs. These processes should occur throughout the development and implementation of the Plan.

3. A focus on the needs of children and young people

Young people are a particularly vulnerable cohort in relation to affordable housing and homelessness. This is particularly important as the the housing needs of children and young people are not adequately addressed in other national strategies. The Plan must ensure that it is age appropriate in its approach, and broad enough to capture children and young people and the discrete housing issues that they face due to their age, experience and educational/employment status and capabilities.

4. The need for a holistic approach

Housing solutions alone will not solve housing instability and homelessness. Those experiencing housing instability and/or homelessness need housing solutions and supports that are holistic and meet their preferences and needs. Support needs to be holistic to help them receive multi-faceted support, with strong links and association to other required services. The plan needs to address the problem and/or underpinning drivers of disadvantage that are barriers to accessing affordable housing.

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