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MEDIA RELEASE

Independent authority must develop national housing strategy

Claire Victory, National President of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia said only a national housing strategy developed by a new, independent authority will begin to address the chronic and growing shortage of affordable housing in Australia.

The National Council's submission to the Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue's *Inquiry into housing affordability and supply* lists 10 recommendations, including measures to address funding gaps for community housing providers.

'The size of the funding gap depends on a number of issues, including whether community housing providers already own land that can be assigned to new housing,' Ms Victory said.

'The Society currently holds land in NSW and South Australia but requires funding to progress the development of new dwellings.

'State and territory governments have recently handed down budgets with variable commitments to increase social, community and affordable housing and the Commonwealth, at the very least, should be matching the funding.

'The Society's housing profile includes short-term crisis accommodation, transitional housing, medium to longer-term community housing, accessible housing for people living with disability and specialist homelessness services.

'Every day we see evidence that access to safe and affordable housing leads to increased individual and community wellbeing, as well as better outcomes in health, education and employment, and economic and social participation.

‘And if the evidence isn’t clear enough, for the first time, Australia’s Infrastructure Plan 2021 includes social housing and notes that housing quality, supply and design are inadequate across the country.’

In its submission the National Council calls for:

- A National Housing Strategy developed with key stakeholders and endorsed by all jurisdictions
- A review of Commonwealth Rent Assistance to ensure it is appropriately targeted and funded
- Alternatives to the National Rental Affordability Scheme as it gradually winds up to full closure in 2026
- All governments to commit to recommendations in Australia’s Infrastructure Plan 2021 concerning social and affordable housing
- Government funding incentives and targeted assistance to encourage community housing provider investment in new community and affordable housing
- National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation to extend the term of its loans (to 25 years), limit General Service Agreements to the project being funded and reduce fees and charges.
- A reform agenda for the National Regulatory System for Community Housing to address the findings contained in its Review Report and done in consultation with key stakeholders, especially Indigenous Community Housing Providers.

Vinnies has invited members of the committee to visit one of the Society’s many community housing projects. A copy of the submission is available [here](#).

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 groups located in local communities across the country.

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