



Social Housing Pledge

The messaging and FAQs below will help you answer questions that an MP may ask and give you helpful information that will help persuade MPs to do more to build social housing and combat homelessness.



Key messages

- 1 There are almost 120,000 Australians without a home every night.
- 2 The number of Australians experiencing homelessness is growing every year because of skyrocketing rents and a shortage of social housing.
- 3 The lack of social housing means more people end up homeless because they can't find an affordable home, and those who are already homeless have no way to escape it.
- 4 The COVID crisis has increased pressure on millions of Australians and is pushing even more people into rent stress and homelessness.
- 5 There has never been a better time to invest in social housing. Everybody's Home and our partners have developed the Social Housing Acceleration and Renovation Program (SHARP) that would deliver urgently needed jobs and provide an immediate boost in social housing.
- 6 We're asking you to show your support to address the biggest issue causing homelessness by signing the pledge to build more social housing.

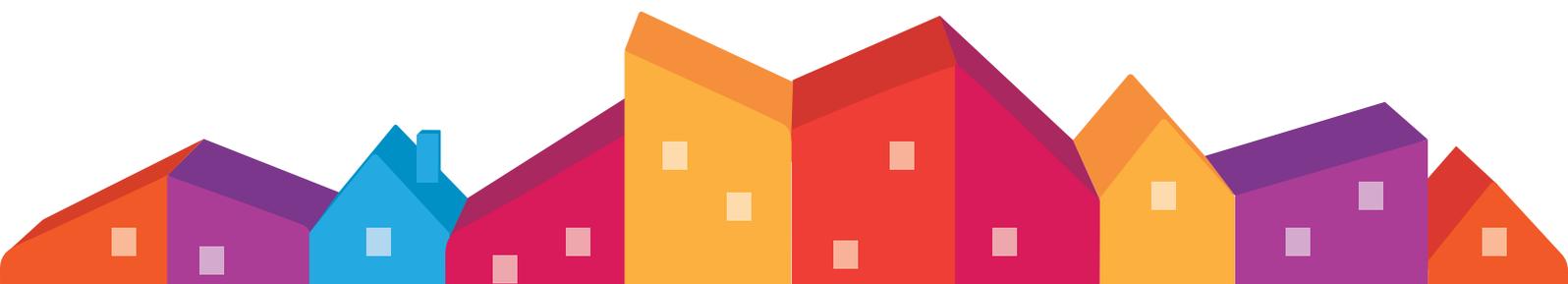
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Key facts

- 1** The latest Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) research shows **Australia has a shortfall of 433,000 social housing properties.**
- 2** According to KPMG, **every dollar spent on social housing boosts GDP by \$1.30.** Social housing is an investment, not a cost.
- 3** Census data shows that **homelessness increased by 14 per cent** between 2011 and 2016, an **increase of 15,000 people.**
- 4** In 2016, UNSW found **811,000 Australian households were in rental stress.**
- 5** **Building 30,000 social homes** over four years will **increase housing** and also **create up to 18,000 construction related jobs** in local communities per year.



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FAQs

1 What is the aim of the pledge?

The aim of the pledge is a public commitment from members of parliament to support social housing investment. The next two months is a critical time because government is establishing stimulus priorities. The more supportive MPs we have on board, the greater the pressure on parties to support investment in social housing as part of Australia's recovery.

2 How can I help?

We want you to meet (either virtually or in-person) with your federal MP and explain how, using the SHARP proposal, we could make a difference both in terms of homelessness and urgently needed jobs.

3 What are the key components of the pledge?

Using ABS data, Everybody's Home has developed an interactive map which gives an insight into homelessness and social housing need in all electorates.

Using this tool and your advocacy, we hope to convince as many MPs as possible to sign a pledge that commits them to supporting more investment in social housing. You can look at the homelessness data at: [LINK TBC]

4 Should we aim to engage our local MP during Homelessness Week?

Homelessness Week is a sitting week in Canberra and many MPs may not have time to meet. Organisations based in Melbourne will also still be in lockdown.

Considering this, you should arrange to meet with your MP whenever they are available. If that is before or after Homelessness Week, it doesn't matter. We just want MPs to sign the pledge before the Federal Budget in October.

5 Some federal MPs argue that housing is a state issue, how should I respond?

The Federal Government has a shared responsibility for housing with the states and has a rich history of investing in social housing. The Commonwealth Housing Commission was established in 1943 and in 1945, the first Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) was established and has continued to the current day (now called the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement).

The Federal Government has also historically increased social housing investment at times of economic crisis. The massive post World War II social housing construction agenda, and the Social Housing Initiative in response to the Global Financial Crisis, are just two examples of this effort.

6 As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, governments have no money, how can we justify spending on housing?

Building social housing is the most effective way to stimulate the economy and create jobs. Australia's construction industry employs around 1.2 million people, which is more than nine per cent of Australia's 13 million jobs.

Every dollar spent on social housing boosts GDP by \$1.30 as well as having other far-reaching economic and social benefits. This boost in GDP would be hugely valuable as Australia tries to recover from the pandemic.

7 What if the MP claims the government has already spent heavily on social housing?

The Federal Government has been decreasing its investment in social housing and homelessness. In 2010-11 the Federal Government spent \$2.3 billion on social housing and homelessness, but that number has been steadily decreasing and sits at \$1.7 billion for 2019-20.

At a time when rent stress and homelessness are on the increase throughout Australia, the government's investment in social housing should also be increasing, not decreasing.

8 What if the MP simply doesn't seem to care and won't sign the pledge?

You can use the ABS statistics and map to show how significant homelessness is in the electorate they have been chosen to represent.

Even after your persuasive discussion, your MP may not choose to sign the pledge. Politely ask for a reason why they can't sign the pledge today. MPs who don't sign up to the pledge will be noted in the same way that those who do sign up will be.

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