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MEDIA RELEASE

Building the Recovery: Investment in social housing will create jobs and improve social outcomes during the pandemic

Today, national housing and homelessness leaders have called for an immediate employment-boosting investment to expand Australia's social housing by 30,000 homes as the country experiences a wave of job losses due to Covid-19.

National peak bodies, the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA), Homelessness Australia, National Shelter, and the national housing campaign, Everybody's Home have outlined a process with four overlapping waves to deliver urgently needed high quality housing within three years.

The Social Housing Acceleration and Renovation Program (SHARP) would involve:

1. Wave 1 – social housing maintenance and upgrading
2. Wave 2 – acquisition of sites and properties requiring renovation / completion which are suitable for social housing
3. Wave 3 – shovel ready development projects
4. Wave 4 – longer term new development projects

SHARP calls for total government investment of \$7.7 billion; \$7.2 billion for new build/acquisition and \$500 million for renovation of existing homes. Commonwealth contributions should be complemented by state/territory governments in the form of land and/or capital and local governments may also make a valuable contribution.

CHIA CEO, Wendy Hayhurst says, "The report we're launching today is important because our package delivers both social and economic outcomes for Australia. These are immediate actions the Government can take now that will build a better Australia.

"A social housing-led recovery program will boost the economy and create thousands of new jobs in construction, a major industry of employment in Australia. Six per cent of all jobs in Australia are housing construction related. At the same time it will start to make inroads into our huge national shortfall in rental housing affordable to ordinary people'.

"Immediate renovation work on existing social housing properties will improve their energy efficiency, and bring down bills for tenants. It will improve the standards so that everyone can stay safe and healthy inside their own homes," said Ms Hayhurst.



Chair of Homelessness Australia, Jenny Smith says, "The pandemic has shown how vulnerable people are when they don't have a home, and how urgently we need more social housing so that every Australian can have a safe place to live.

"The pandemic has also created an economic crisis that is making many more Australians vulnerable to homelessness. New social housing is urgently needed to respond to both existing homelessness, and to Australians now experiencing homelessness for the first time."

National Shelter CEO, Adrian Pisarski says, "New social housing infrastructure would fill a structural gap in Australia's housing market.

"Social housing construction is also the most effective infrastructure program to stimulate the economy. The construction industry has seen a 40% reduction in forward contracts because of Covid-19, many of which would have been for home building projects. Investing in renovating and building more social housing will help get thousands of Australians back into work and rebuild the economy."

Everybody's Home spokesperson, Kate Colvin says, "Too many Australians pay more for rent than they can afford, because there are too few affordable rentals available. The SHARP stimulus package will provide urgently needed homes so people on low incomes can find an affordable place to rent."

Media Contact: Aliya Ahmad 0428 684 307 or aliya@chp.org.au

The summary proposal is [available here](#).

This proposal is also backed by leaders across the community including:

- Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)
- Australian Council of Social Service
- City Futures Research Centre, UNSW
- Centre for Urban Transitions, Swinburne University
- Centre for Social Impact
- Australian Institute of Architects
- The Constellation Project
- Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (AAEH)
- Arup



- Professor Nicole Gurrán, Director, Australian Housing & Urban Research Institute (AHURI) Sydney Research Centre, School of Architecture, Planning and Design, University of Sydney
- Dr Laurence Troy, Lecturer in Urbanism, School of Architecture, Planning and Design, University of Sydney