

An aerial, black and white photograph of a densely populated residential neighborhood. The houses are packed closely together, with many featuring tiled roofs. There are numerous trees interspersed among the buildings. A prominent red banner is overlaid on the upper portion of the image, containing the text '2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT' in white, bold, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is a white circular logo for 'national shelter' with a red house icon above the word 'shelter'.

# 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

The logo for National Shelter, featuring a red house icon with three white windows above the word 'shelter' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The word 'national' is in a smaller, black, sans-serif font above 'shelter'. The entire logo is set within a white circular background.

 national  
**shelter**

# Chairperson's Report

The last twelve months have continued to pave the way to a strong future for National Shelter with the ongoing consolidation of our membership base, partnerships and sponsorships, reflecting our strong relationships and engagement with stakeholders in the housing system.

The National Rental Affordability Index (RAI) continues to be a successful presentation of data that sheds light on rental affordability in the private rental sector over time, particularly in relation to people living on low incomes. We thank our partners on the Index, SGS Economics and Planning, Community Sector Banking and the Brotherhood of St. Lawrence. As we farewell Community Sector Banking (Bendigo Adelaide Bank), we are pleased to welcome Beyond Bank as a new supporter of the RAI and look forward to continuing the heavy media presence of the release of the Index each year and its positive impact on our advocacy for housing affordability.

National Shelter was pivotal in reforming a national group to work on housing affordability, the National Affordable Housing Alliance, to mirror the Housing Summit formed in 2004, that brings together industry and not for profit housing, welfare, homelessness, union and superannuation peak bodies, attesting to our commitment to collaboration. National Shelter was invited to chair the first meeting to establish the terms of reference and seek consensus about the purpose and role of the group, which is continuing to produce policy and program options and undertake collaborative advocacy.

While the pandemic interrupted many of our face to face meetings, the increased use of online platforms assisted National Shelter to continue and expand the networks and meetings it could initiate and participate in. Our political engagement was strong, despite travel restrictions, and we have met with ministers and advisors from all parties as well as senior public servants, prosecuting the need for a national housing strategy and improvements to the housing system. As well as regular online Council meetings, I was pleased to welcome many of the Council members to Adelaide in person, and some online, in March this year where we conducted our governance activities including strategy, finances and planning.

National Shelter has contributed to and supports the Social Housing Acceleration and Renovation Proposal and the Housing Booster and Aggregator proposal with other peak bodies including Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA), Industry Super NSW with support from the Constellation project and we appreciate their collegiate approach to policy and advocacy.

# Chairperson's Report

We were pleased to release our new policy platform leading up to the next Federal election. The platform represents many months of work and contributions from Shelter policy officers across the country. While National Shelter is small, we have a strong network of contributors and policy knowledge across our membership, and we thank them for their support. The Platform has been sent to all members of parliament seeking their responses to the recommendations contained within it and we will update you about their party positions in the future.

I thank our Executive Officer, Adrian Pisarski for his tireless work this year. Working as a sole employee can be a challenging environment, especially when there is an additional task of ensuring the financial viability of a national peak body. Adrian has risen to that challenge and has achieved success beyond the expectations of the National Shelter Council members.

It is no easy feat to work on both aspects of a very small not for profit organisation – its financial sustainability and its core business. Adrian's policy work, research, political engagement and advocacy have not faltered, even when there have been times of great uncertainty.

Adrian has announced his retirement in March 2022, following the National Housing Conference. The National Shelter Council has expressed that Adrian's retirement is a great loss to our national peak body, our knowledge base and our advocacy and we will miss Adrian's leadership around the Council table. We are looking forward to continuing to work with Adrian leading up to March next year and wish him well for his retirement. There are many things that Adrian wishes to focus on when he is not working full time, but we will not let him go completely, Adrian has generously offered to make himself available when we require his assistance.

# Chairperson's Report

I thank my colleagues on the Executive team, John Engler (Vice-Chairperson), Peter MacMillan (Treasurer) and Pattie Chugg (Secretary) for your input and commitment to National Shelter and the members of the Council. I also acknowledge and thank Sorcha Walshe for her contributions to our communications and social media platforms.

There is a new phase approaching National Shelter and we thank our members and supporters - we look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming year and continuing to provide a strong voice for those living with housing need.

**Dr Alice Clark**  
**Chairperson**



# Executive Officer's Report

This is the last annual report I will write for National Shelter or any other organisation as I plan to retire at the end of March 2022. National Shelter has been a major part of my life for nearly 20 years since becoming Chairperson in 2004/5. My association with National Shelter began in 1983 when I attended my first "First National Housing Conference" run by National Shelter in Sydney, I think there have been at least 4 first NHCs since then.

There comes a point where one is no longer the right person and while my passion for the cause of affordable housing remains undiminished, I think this role is better played by someone younger, closer to the realities and who hasn't been through the cycle of Parliamentary Inquiries, policies and programs as often as I. I will be happy to play an advisory role if required and hope to be able to catch up with many colleagues in person at the National Housing Conference in Melbourne.

The past year has been among the most challenging most of us will have faced with the disruption caused by the pandemic and the various restrictions, limits on movements and the change in practices it required. National Shelter stayed engaged and even grew its influence and advocacy and will emerge from the crisis stronger than it went in.

Among the most successful elements (even if now being over-used) was the pivot to virtual meetings and events and the need to become familiar with the workings of Zoom, Teams, Webex, and other new conferencing and meeting platforms. It meant we could continue and even enhance our national engagements. Many of these technologies had been available but the inability to travel and meet in person saw us all take up virtual and hybrid conferencing and provided interesting insights into people's homes, children, pets and lives we wouldn't have otherwise experienced. We hope all those books have been read, kids tucked in, guitars played, and pets patted.

It also brought a higher level of engagement with our colleague peaks, government, opposition and crossbenchers than we have previously had. For peaks we found new ways to cooperate and coordinate and in the early stages of the pandemic, we were meeting weekly with Minister's advisors, opposition spokespeople and officials to provide feedback and advice on how to keep Australia safe and ensure people were protected.

# Executive Officer's Report

Housing was an early success within COVID, especially as State/Territory Governments took control and opened new accommodation options to allow people sleeping rough to be housed. It was a tribute to our State/Territory colleagues how well they engaged and to governments for how well they responded. Over \$4b was spent by States/Territories and up to 40,000 people protected with improved housing options, there was even a chance, now sadly lost, to end rough sleeping.

The federal government won applause for their lifting of income support through doubling Jobseeker (formerly Newstart) and establishing Jobkeeper which meant that people had, many for the first time in years (or their lives), the ability to live with dignity, pay or keep paying their bills, eat properly and stay safe. It was a period when ideological approaches to welfare, housing, safety and health saw the nation err on the side of generosity for a proud, if brief moment.

During this time, National Shelter with CHIA and Homelessness Australia pitched the Social Housing and Recovery Program (SHARP) proposal to Government. It gained support from a wide variety of sources but has so far been resisted by the Commonwealth on the (absurd) basis that social housing is (only) a State/Territory responsibility. This ignores 70 years of joint action by the Commonwealth and States going back to the Chifley government and continually supported by the LNP and ALP since. The idea that social housing is a State/Territory responsibility comes out of the Abbott "Reform the Federation" process but has been heightened by P.M. Morrison and Ministers Sukkar and Ruston over the past year.

While we and others have had good access to staff in Ministers' offices (Ruston, Howarth, Sukkar) and enjoyed regular meetings with Luke Howarth while he held the reins, we haven't yet been able to meet Minister Sukkar, despite numerous letters, requests, calls and tweets. We have even written to the P.M. to seek engagement which has led to a good meeting with Minister Ruston and the promise of more. We have invited Minister Sukkar to the AGM as a keynote speaker, but remain concerned about our access to enable proper advocacy on the housing needs of low income households.

# Executive Officer's Report

In preparation for this eventuality, we have been active with CHIA and Homelessness Australia, in establishing the National Affordable Housing Alliance (NAHA) with the Master Builders (MBA), Housing Industry Association (HIA), Property Council, Industry Super, ACOSS and the ACTU. We have also been active with PwC and others in the Constellation Project working on Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning (MIZ) and with UNSW City Futures, Glasgow Uni, CHIA and others in developing the Housing Productivity Research Consortium (HPRC). It's been a year of alliance building.

These alliances allow us to broaden our influence and involve others, often closer to Government than we are able to be, to make the same arguments and continue pressuring for social and affordable housing. They also broaden the inputs we receive to influence our thinking and help to pressure Government on our issues from unlikely sources.

One of the most promising aspects of the COVID period is a collective move away from deficit denial and it's been great to see that State governments (Victoria, Qld, NSW, Tasmania and WA) have now committed over \$10b to build social and affordable housing over the coming years. It's a testament to the persistence of the sector that has seen this occur.

It's now been 2.75 years since the last federal election and we have been busy updating our [policy platform](#) released in early September. We broke our asks down into sections and provided evidence-based background papers and summaries for everything we call for. These now sit on our website. We have given the platform to all federal MPs and parties will ask them to respond with their views on our asks so we can then publish party responses ahead of the election and create a scorecard of party intentions around housing.

One of the key projects we have been involved with for 2-3 years has been supported by Shelter WA with a grant from the Federal Department of Health and Ageing. National Shelter is part of the governance of the project with the newly formed National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Association (NATSIHA). The project has produced a forward-looking report "Reimagining Indigenous Housing, Health and Wealth" which changes the narrative and approach to the future after looking back at the history of policies and programs.

# Executive Officer's Report

It imagines a future based on Aboriginal community-controlled agencies and agency, building a national housing pool and generating wealth and health for First Peoples as a result. Authors Prof. Kerry Arabena and Shame Hamilton's report can be viewed [here](#).

Another project we have been working on for several years is also now underway. [Opening the Door](#) is a project which aims to open conversations and pathways for people with disability to improve their housing options and understanding of housing systems. The first forum is happening as I write and will be followed by fora in every State and Territory.

I mentioned earlier that we have worked closely with CHIA and Homelessness Australia this year. One project we have been closely working on has been the development of the Affordable and Social Housing Booster and Aggregator. The "Boost" or AHB is designed as a tax-credit based subsidy for affordable and social housing, which would vary for locations and cost and, if implemented, become a follow up the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) but with key design differences allowing it to operate for both social and affordable housing and link with other subsidy elements (planning, land, grants, capital and borrowing) that form components of bids for the boost. It would establish the steady reliable pipeline of housing that could also work cyclically with economic ups and downs establishing the long-term certainty of steady growth.

The year has also had a few bumps, apart from COVID restrictions. The major one for us has been the withdrawal of sponsorship by Bendigo Adelaide Bank (BAB) from our Rental Affordability Index (RAI). The RAI continues to grow in importance as a rental metric and while others have also provided much more focus on rental housing metrics, none do the job of comparing price with income that the RAI does. It continues to generate major media attention and is an important part of the AIHW data dashboard and cited by Treasuries around the country.

We have now added Beyond Bank as a supporting partner for the RAI and are changing our banking from BAB to Beyond Bank and encourage our members and associates to consider doing the same.

We are disappointed by BAB's withdrawal, especially after they cancelled the banking license of Community Sector Banking (CSB, our original sponsor) and effectively captured 20,000 CSB customers in the process. This act removed an institution the community sector had built with BAB as a partner.

# Executive Officer's Report

The role National Shelter continues to play and the influence it has, can be seen in the announcement by Labor leader Anthony Albanese of the ALP's intent to create a Housing Australia Future Fund to build 30,000 new social and affordable housing units. We were rightly critical of the ALP for dropping their housing tax reforms but continue to work with the ALP, Greens and LNP to offer policy solutions.

Eventually, the LNP will have to drop its refrain of State responsibility and recognise it also shares a responsibility to provide social and affordable housing, not on its own but in partnership with states, CHPs, local government and the private sector. This is what the future will demand and what is possible if our policy proposals are properly considered.

We can only continue to push and hope the LNP recognises that the issue of affordable housing is beyond politics and requires the support of all parties, that's our aim.

2020-21 has been a challenge but we have found a way to maintain and increase our advocacy, resource base and work rate. 2021-22 will have an election in it and we intend to make sure housing is a major component of the decision Australia faces. To do this and keep doing all the other things remains a collective effort from our State and National members, associates and supporters and friends.

On a personal note, perhaps the highlight of the past year was being asked to contribute to Tanya Plibersek's edited collection of COVID responses "UPTURN". I've worked with Tanya since her days of being the opposition spokesperson on Housing in 2006 and then Minister in 2008, it's an association I'm proud of and I was honoured to be included as a contributor alongside many luminaries.

We now go into another period of pre-election posturing (now muddled by the prospect of acquiring nuclear powered submarines). Hopefully we are also approaching the other side of COVID and I remain hopeful that the next 20 years will see better housing policies than the last 25 have.

# Executive Officer's Report

In closing, I want to say a big thank you to our very part-time staffer Sorcha Walshe who helps prepare our enews and communications, as well as Kelley Reay for her work as Bookkeeper. A shout out to Mr Jacob Gates who provides our website support voluntarily despite our offers to pay him. I also want to acknowledge that Shelter at the national level is very much a network reliant on all of its parts working with a great deal of trust and support without which my role would be much harder.

Finally, thanks to our Executive members Pattie Chugg, John Engeler, Peter McMillan and our chairperson Dr Alice Clark who provides me with weekly support and gives up much of her time to ensure we remain on track and true to our goals.

**Adrian Pisarski**  
**Executive Officer**



# Treasurer's Report

In the 2020/21 financial year, National Shelter consolidated its financial position by generating a net profit of \$42,505. This was in line with the previous year's surplus of \$43,922. Our balance sheet strength is now in the best shape that it's been since the association was defunded in 2015.

National Shelter's cash position has also improved, comfortably covering all current and non-current liabilities.

Operating expenses on the previous year are up by 26%, largely attributable to increased project expenses partially offset by project related income. Membership income has increased by \$20,900 (19%) due to continued hard work from the Executive Officer in promoting the policy and advocacy value for members that National Shelter offers.

Small but useful improvements in financial reporting through to the Executive Committee and National Council members throughout the year, with the assistance of our external bookkeeper, Kelley Reay, and reporting through Xero, has helped ensure that the financial status and performance of the association is highly visible.

We thank our sponsors who provided valuable financial support throughout the year to National Shelter's key projects. Special thanks goes to the Brotherhood of St Laurence for their continued financial support of the Rental Affordability Index. Shelter NSW and Shelter WA have also made generous contributions to National Shelter projects including international COVID-19 responses, COVID accommodation research, and media support for National Shelter.

Looking ahead, additional opportunities for collaboration with members, academic institutions and other key housing stakeholders will continue. Examples include our partnership with Rights Inclusion Australia and initiatives to keep the focus on rental affordability and regional housing markets at the forthcoming National Housing Conference 2022 in Melbourne next March.

National Shelter exists because of the support of its members across Australia. In what has been another very trying year with COVID-19 social and economic impacts, we pay a special thanks to our members who have continued to support us through tough times.

# Treasurer's Report

I extend my appreciation to Adrian and to all National Shelter members, whose ongoing support is greatly appreciated in order to support the vital work that the organisation does.

**Peter McMillan**  
**Treasurer**



# The Year in Pictures



Adrian Pisarski with the Hon  
Linda Burney MP



Adrian Pisarski with Alan Kirkland  
from CHOICE



Adrian Pirarski with Michele Neil,  
the President of the Australian  
Council of Trade Unions

# The Year in Pictures



Michelle Mackenzie (Shelter WA)  
with Sen Pat Dodson



Adrian Pisarski, Ivan Simon,  
Michelle Mackenzie with Minister  
Ken Wyatt



Adrian Pisarski with Wendy  
Hayhurst and Michelle Mackenzie  
at the launch of *Elephant in the  
Economy* in Parliament House

# The Year in Pictures



(Left) Adrian Pisarski being filmed for The Project  
(Right) Two new Shelter staff Koko and Tora



The National Council Meeting in Adelaide



(Left) Adrian Pisarski and Bevan Warner from Launch Housing in Melbourne  
(Right) National Shelter Executive at work

# Social Media Impressions

We use our social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter) to reach a larger audience to promote our policy work and upcoming events. Here are some of the highlights of our social platforms in 2020-2021!

## Facebook



We reached  
**12,178**  
people

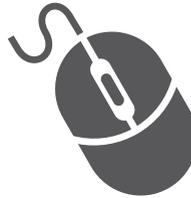


Our highest  
post reached  
**4,332**  
people

## Twitter



**1,119**  
tweets



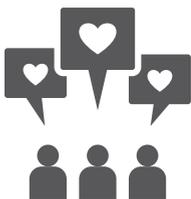
**10,228**  
profile  
visits



**2,646**  
mentions



**360**  
**NEW**  
followers



**658,000**  
impressions