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## **Federal Budget invests further in housing supply measures but lacks bold and ambitious housing reform**

The Federal Budget delivered tonight contains measures that continues to see the Commonwealth further it's previous investments in the delivery of social and affordable housing/housing supply. National Shelter, the peak body representing the housing interests of low-income Australians, says now is the time for the Commonwealth Government to back their housing investments in with a bold and ambitious reform agenda.

Emma Greenhalgh, CEO of National Shelter says "The Commonwealth government have made significant investment towards solving the housing crisis since coming to office and this Budget builds on that investment by targeting initiatives to remove impediments to the construction of housing including training construction workers and funding enabling infrastructure. These are critical measures to expedite the supply of new housing to the market and also contribute to speeding up the supply of social and affordable housing. The additional measures to support community housing providers and Housing Australia are welcome to expand their capacity to respond to the housing crisis.

"The further increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance will continue to provide some relief to private rental households in housing stress. The further relief from energy bills for households, extending eligibility for existing higher base rate of JobSeeker payments, and freezing the maximum Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme are all measures that puts money back into the hands of those who need it most and are in immediate crisis. However, we still need to see a more meaningful response to poverty and cost-of-living for low-income households by significantly increasing income support and allowances.

"We welcome the resolution of the new National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness (NASHH). This means that the sector can focus on front line service delivery for those experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity with certainty for the next five years. The doubling of funding to homelessness service is overdue, but we are concerned that there is no significant uplift in a five-year housing and homelessness agreement – this is not a scaled investment to the demand that exists. We are also concerned that the additional funding in homelessness has come at the expense of the housing component of the agreement, specifically repairs and maintenance.

"We would have liked to have seen this Budget go further with bold decisions about structural reform of the housing system in Australia including reforming tax concessions for negative gearing and the Capital Gains Tax discount that entrench inequality in our housing system.

"Additionally, we need to understand the framework that is guiding these investments in housing and homelessness via a National Housing and Homelessness Plan. We need to understand the aspirations and targets, and how shorter-term funding measures are being delivered within a context of a pathway to permanency and long-term housing solutions.

"We know government has an appetite to solve the crisis, but we are still waiting for bold reforms that could address the core problems in our housing system.

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