



## JOINT STATEMENT FROM National Shelter, Community Housing Federation of Australia and Homelessness Australia

Tuesday 10 February 2015

**Embargoed until 9am Wednesday 11 February 2015.**

### **Peaks essential to consultation processes**

Australia's housing and homelessness peaks have called on the Abbott Government to make good on their promise to be more consultative by restoring funding to the peak bodies who provide a voice for vulnerable Australians.

The housing and homelessness peaks Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA), Homelessness Australia and National Shelter were told just before Christmas that they would not be funded past 30 June 2015. Their defunding was the result of the government stripping away \$21 million in housing and homelessness funding, which will have a detrimental impact on research, innovation and effectiveness and efficiency of long term service provision in the housing field.

The Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA), Homelessness Australia and National Shelter today [Wed 11 Feb] appeared before the Senate Economics Committee to stress the importance of peak bodies in consultative processes.

Adrian Pisarski from National Shelter said that the Government's announcement on the eve of Christmas 2014 that it was cutting funding from the housing and homelessness peaks was reflective of a government unwilling to listen to input.

"Since all of this talk of a spill the Government has stressed that it will be more consultative. Good consultation needs to be an ongoing process, and not just something you say you'll do after there is a backlash," Mr Pisarski said.

"Organisations like CHFA, Homelessness Australia and National Shelter provide the government with considered, evidence-based advice on policy which reflects a range of perspectives, including that of low income and other vulnerable people.

Glenda Stevens, CEO of Homelessness Australia said that without strong national peak bodies, government decision makers will be free to ignore housing and homelessness, leaving one of the biggest welfare issues: whether families can get and keep a home, out in the cold.

"Far too many Australians are homeless, and many thousands more are in housing stress and at risk of becoming homeless. It is wrong for Government to try to silence the peaks who speak on behalf of vulnerable Australians," Ms Stevens said.

Carol Croce, Executive Director of CHFA, highlighted the peaks concerns that the pre-Christmas cuts flagged a retreat by the Commonwealth from responsibility for housing and homelessness.

“The phrase ‘housing crisis’ now appears frequently in headlines. But there are hints in the Federalism review that the Commonwealth may try to walk away from its responsibilities to build a better housing system,” Ms Croce said.

"More than ever the community housing sector needs to be working collaboratively with Government towards a viable solution to the lack of affordable housing. Diminishing the resources of constructive stakeholders such as the housing peaks is a retrograde step that runs counter to the Government’s support for an active, robust civil society to work with them to solve the most pressing social issues facing Australia” .

## **ENDS**

For further comment:

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