



# Homes NSW Discussion paper

December 2024

## To inform the Homes for NSW Plan



Homes  
NSW

# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the First Nations Peoples of NSW and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We acknowledge the ongoing connection Aboriginal people have to this land and recognise Aboriginal people as the original custodians of this land.

Published by Homes NSW  
[nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw](https://nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw)

Discussion paper on the Homes for NSW Plan  
First published: December 2024

Department reference number:  
AF24/17109

#### Copyright and disclaimer

© State of New South Wales through the Department of Communities and Justice 2024. Information in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing, November 2024, and is subject to change. For more information, please visit [nsw.gov.au/copyright](https://nsw.gov.au/copyright).

# Contents

## 1

---

<b>An invitation to work with Homes NSW</b>	<b>4</b>
The Homes for NSW Plan	6
What type of accommodation and services are covered?	7
Our draft vision and priorities	8

---

## 2

---

<b>Creating change – our areas for reform</b>	<b>9</b>
Customer-driven service	10
<i>Streamlining access and matching people to assistance</i>	11
<i>Focusing on sustainable tenancies and communities</i>	13
<i>Service delivery across social landlords</i>	14
More and better homes	15
<i>Setting targets</i>	16
<i>Working out how affordable housing and key worker housing fit in</i>	16
<i>Building strong and sustainable estate communities</i>	17
A system that works	18
<i>Delivering homelessness reform</i>	19
<i>Working with Aboriginal communities</i>	19
<i>Collaborative governance, measurement and partnership</i>	21

---

## 3

---

<b>The non-market housing and homelessness system</b>	<b>22</b>
Social housing	23
The homelessness system	24
Affordable housing and key worker housing	25
Where does public funding come from for the non-market system?	26

---

## 4

---

<b>How to provide feedback</b>	<b>27</b>
--------------------------------	-----------

---

# 1

## An invitation to work with Homes NSW



This discussion paper is an invitation to work with Homes NSW to deliver better outcomes for people seeking housing and homelessness assistance in NSW. Your feedback will help us produce the ***Homes for NSW Plan*** which will be released in early 2025.

You can provide feedback on this paper by:

- contributing in writing. Send your views to [theplan@homes.nsw.gov.au](mailto:theplan@homes.nsw.gov.au)
- taking our guided submission survey at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw-plan](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw-plan)

A shorter version of this paper is also available at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw-plan](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw-plan).

We need to hear from all experts to make sure we get this right!

We particularly want to hear from people with lived experience, or who work with people who:

- live in social housing, affordable housing or key worker housing
- are waiting for social housing
- receive housing products such as rental subsidies or homelessness services
- have lived in crisis or temporary accommodation
- or have experienced homelessness including sleeping rough, couch surfing or living in cars or tents.

In the following pages we outline a draft vision and ideas for change. These have come from consideration of:

- previous social housing and homelessness strategy and program evaluations
- community, stakeholder and customer feedback
- data analysis.

**This is a critical moment to think hard about the housing and homelessness system we all want.**

The creation of Homes NSW and historic new funding is an opportunity to start to address the housing and homelessness crisis in NSW.

The \$6.6 billion *Building Homes for NSW* program (announced as part of the 2024/25 NSW Budget) is the largest investment in social housing and homelessness in the state's history.

It is genuine new investment in a system that has had to survive on too little for too long.

The funding will build 8,400 new social homes and upgrade 33,500 public and Aboriginal homes. Over 50% of the new homes built will be prioritised for women and children fleeing family and domestic violence.

An additional \$527 million has been allocated to boost homelessness support services.



## What is Homes NSW?

In February 2024, the NSW government created Homes NSW – one entity responsible for social housing, affordable housing, key worker housing and homelessness policy and programs. The Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) is also part of Homes NSW and retains its statutory independence.

The aim of Homes NSW is to provide homes and services to people and families in housing need, and to build a sustainable system that recognises housing as a human right.

# The Homes for NSW Plan

The **Homes for NSW Plan**, set for release in early 2025, will detail Homes NSW's strategies to improve outcomes for people in need of housing and homelessness assistance.

The final plan will include:

- a system-wide **vision**
- draft **priorities, objectives or indicators** to track collective progress towards the vision
- **targets** to drive **accountability, transparency, and activity** across the system
- the **actions Homes NSW** will take in the short and medium term

The **Homes for NSW Plan** will link with and reinforce related Homes NSW strategies including [Strong Family, Strong Communities](#) and the [NSW Homelessness Strategy](#).



# What types of accommodation and services are covered?

This paper and the final plan will focus on the ‘non-market housing and homelessness system’ (the **non-market system**).

Products and services in the non-market system require an intervention in the market for people and households on low incomes.

The non-market system includes:

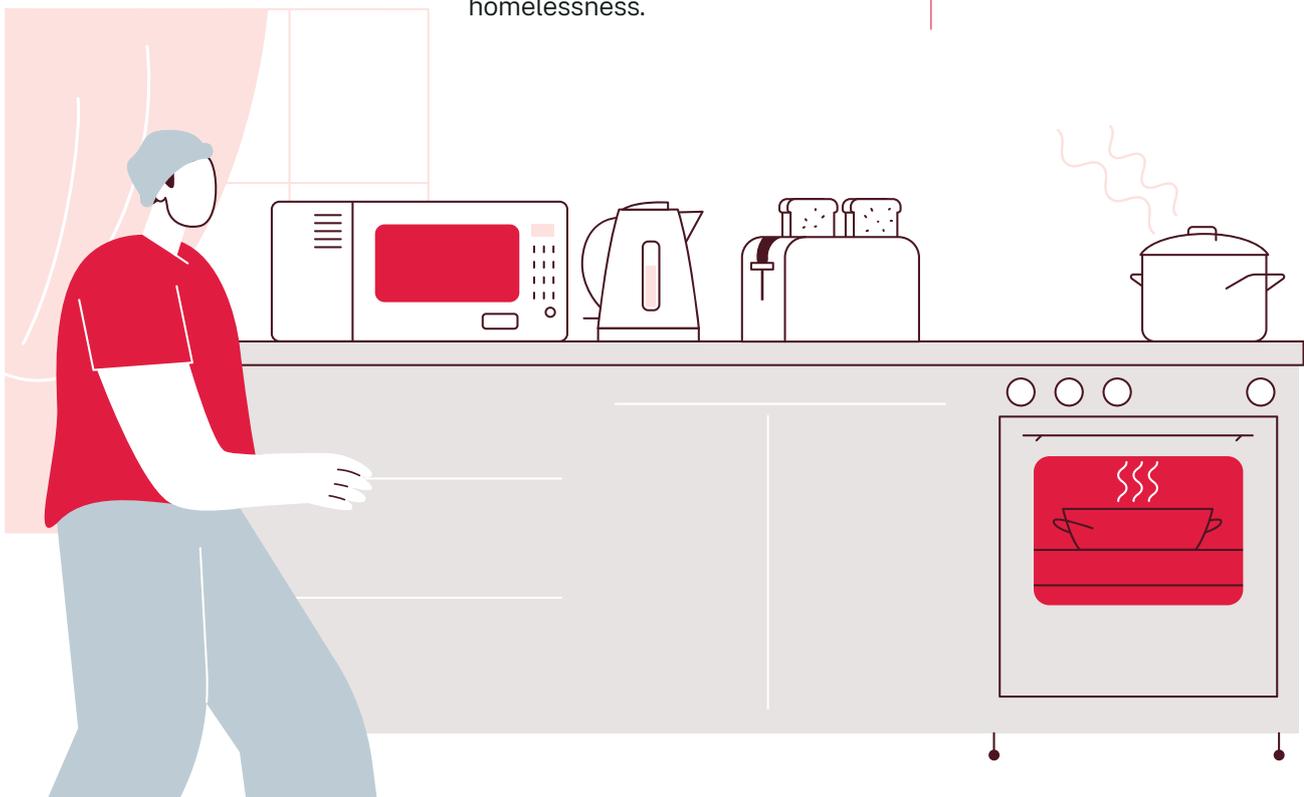
- crisis accommodation (including refuges)
- temporary accommodation (including motels)
- informal housing (such as couch surfing)
- transitional housing
- medium-term housing
- social housing
- affordable housing
- key worker housing
- homelessness services
- Aboriginal housing.

It also includes services provided to people living in or seeking this accommodation or experiencing homelessness.

It does **not** cover private rental and home ownership, even though Homes NSW provides limited assistance to people in the private market, and to Aboriginal people and families to purchase homes.

Unlike the NSW homelessness Strategy, the Homes for NSW plan will **not** be a whole of government response. The strategy and policies of other government agencies will form part of the context only.

For more information about the non-market system see chapter 3.



# Our draft vision and priorities

The draft vision for the non-market system is that:

**‘Everyone has access to a decent home and support if they need it’.**

It’s a hope, or aspiration, for where we will be in 10 years’ time. It invites collective action and collective responsibility.

To achieve the vision we are proposing 3 priority areas for action:

## Customer-driven service

It is critical that the system delivers homelessness services and homes that meet the needs of the people who use them – the customers – and are informed by their voice.

‘Customers’ includes anyone getting or seeking a service provided or funded by the system. This includes tenants, applicants and people who are either receiving homelessness services or who are unable to access homelessness services, and people receiving private market products such as subsidies.

## More and better homes

More homes are an important part of addressing the housing and homelessness crisis. Delivering more social, affordable and key worker housing will have benefits for the whole system.

We need new homes that meet the needs of our customers now and into the future. That means well-maintained, quality homes that are environmentally sustainable and built to be accessible. We want to deliver homes that people are proud to live in.

## A system that works

Homes NSW wants a non-market system that:

- is integrated, so the outcomes being sought by one part of the system are not hindered by rules in another part
- is flexible enough to respond to emerging areas of need or new approaches
- is based on partnership
- builds sustainability
- enables local service coordination
- is informed by the expertise of customers, peak bodies, staff and academics
- is underpinned by effective governance.

Tell us

# Q1

Does the vision that **‘Everyone has access to a decent home and support if they need it’** provide an appropriate system-wide purpose and direction for all providers to work towards over the next 10 years?

# Q2

Are these the right priorities to achieve the vision?



# 2

## Creating change –our areas for reform



The final *Homes for NSW Plan* will contain Homes NSW's actions and commitments to change, collaborate and partner.

We have grouped our ideas for change under the 3 priorities:

**1.**  
customer-driven service

**2.**  
more and better homes

**3.**  
a system that works

Some of the reform areas require us to lead or initiate collaborative responses with our partners for the system. Other reforms relate to policies and processes underpinning public housing service delivery.

Most of these ideas do not offer simple or quick fixes. They are responses to a complicated system and so will have benefits and drawbacks.

# Customer-driven service

Homes NSW has a large and diverse customer base, including social housing tenants, people eligible for social housing and people receiving homelessness services.

People need to be at the centre of the *Homes for NSW Plan*.

We want to involve people with lived experience of social housing and homelessness in policy design and decision making. It is important we hear directly from them about how we are doing and what we should be doing in the future.

**Homes NSW is already making changes to ensure our customers are included in service design**

Homes NSW is developing a Community and Customer Engagement Strategy. The strategy will create pathways to involve the people who use and need our services in the building of the new system, to ensure we have the right priorities and outcomes.

We are also reconsidering Homes NSW's complaints and appeals policies and procedures. Currently, there are different appeals processes depending on your relationship to Homes NSW and the nature of the problem. We want our appeals processes to ensure all our customers receive consistent, timely and fair outcomes regardless of whether they are tenants, applicants, or eligible for or receiving private accommodation products or homelessness services. Appeals are also a rich source of information for continuous improvement based on feedback from customers.

**'When people with lived experience are not involved in policy design and decision making, housing and homelessness services are not as effective.'**

— Stakeholder, Homes NSW formation consultation

## Streamlining access and matching people to assistance

In NSW, we are fortunate to have a strong, established, multi-provider system, where non-government housing providers partner with Homes NSW to deliver access to social housing assistance. The multi-provider system also includes a robust and accredited specialist homelessness service system that provides crisis and transitional housing and support services for people at risk of and experiencing homelessness. This often includes support to access social and affordable housing.

NSW is the only state or territory with a shared access system for social housing, Housing Pathways. It has delivered a no-wrong-door approach for housing assistance by public housing and participating community housing providers, and streamlined access to social housing across the state. Homes NSW is also working on an app (Ngamuru) that will provide Aboriginal community housing providers with better access to the social housing register.

Even with historic levels of funding from the NSW Government, and investment from the Commonwealth Government, the new homes we build will not meet existing levels of demand, let alone anticipated future demand.

## Waitlist and allocation

We have heard the application process for social housing is overwhelming, burdensome and duplicative. This is particularly the case for vulnerable people who do not have the support they need to access the system. We know that:

- it can be difficult to find out what homelessness and housing assistance products are available
- people are required to provide too much evidence, which can delay access for those with complex needs and vulnerabilities
- there can be delays in assessing applications
- there can be issues when applicants have had problems with a previous social housing tenancy
- there can be issues with the annual review process for people with complex needs who still require assistance.

We have heard that the ways properties are matched to people on the waitlist are complex and don't always work for applicants or for support services.

- The two-offer policy in public housing is administratively complex and can mean applicants accept housing that may not meet their needs. This may increase the numbers of people who are unsatisfied with their housing and seek a transfer.
- Allocation zones are inappropriately sized, and applicants can only choose one location. This limits people's choice and ability to decide to move to areas where wait times may be lower.
- Housing many people with complex needs in one area puts pressure on individuals, communities and frontline staff to ensure adequate supports are in place to sustain tenancies over time.

**Changing our policies around applying for housing and allocating housing may improve outcomes for some people and reduce administrative workload, however, it will likely increase the size of the housing register and waiting times.**



**The entire social housing assistance and homelessness support system has never met all the demand it faces.**

Around

**315,000**

households in NSW (44% of households renting privately) are likely to be eligible for social housing based on their income.<sup>1</sup>

The social housing waitlist is around

**58,000**

households (as at 31 July 2024).

In recent years, only about

**12,000-15,000**

households were assisted through social housing or medium-term private market assistance per year.

**'We have to stop making things so complicated.'**

— Stakeholder, Homes NSW formation consultation

## Prioritisation

As demand for social housing has grown and supply has reduced, we have increasingly prioritised available housing to people who are most vulnerable, including priority approved applicants.

Drawing heavily from the priority list has changed the mix of social housing tenancies, particularly in public housing<sup>2</sup>.

Most public housing allocations are now made to people from the priority list.

The wait times for housing are increasing as the housing crisis deepens. The priority list has more than doubled in the last 7 years.

Homelessness is now the single largest application category for priority housing applications—1 in 3 people who apply are homeless.

By housing people from the priority list who have very low incomes, we require more funding to operate the social housing system.



## Homes NSW is already making changes to streamline access

We are:

- considering how to reduce the amount of proof of eligibility people have to give us when they apply for housing. This will remove barriers for people when applying for help with housing and allow housing providers to focus on service delivery and planning rather than reviewing eligibility papers.
- running a trial of different approaches to allocating vacant public housing properties, to build a better approach.

# 15,152

Total priority/escalated households

Aboriginal people are over-represented in all categories of priority



Medical/  
disability

## 35%

## 21%

Other includes natural disaster, portfolio management

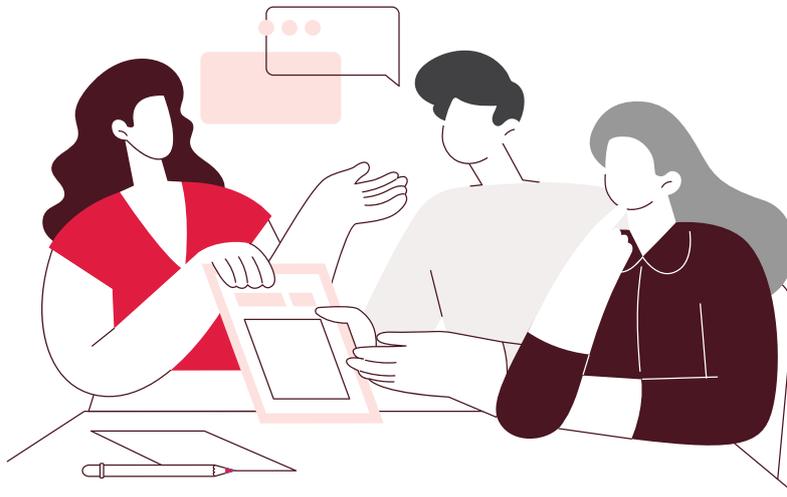
## 19%

At Risk. Includes risk of abuse, neglect, domestic violence, and out-of-home care

## 25%

Homeless includes rough sleeping, eviction, refuge, severe overcrowding

Source: Historical Commissioning Dataset (2024 preliminary). Data as of 30 June 2024



## Focusing on sustainable tenancies and communities

As social housing has increasingly been targeted to those in greatest need, the responsibilities of a social landlord have increased in complexity.

Many people living in social housing have complex needs that if unaddressed can lead to tenancy issues, neighbourhood complaints and possible eviction. Homes NSW recognises the importance of doing everything possible to assist our customers to avoid eviction and the vital role of support services in this.

We know many of our customers are unable to access the support they need, at the intensity required, for the length of time they need it. This places extra responsibility on social landlords to coordinate support provision.

We have heard from housing providers there is limited access to support which helps sustain tenancies:

- Often supports come from other service systems such as homelessness, health or community services. However, many of these are already at capacity.

- Tenancy management ratios differ significantly across housing providers. This can make support coordination difficult, particularly for frontline public housing staff.
- Housing providers, particularly Aboriginal housing providers, frequently deliver tenancy supports without additional funding.

Homes NSW must also ensure our tenancy policies are consistent with the NSW government's commitment to ensuring homelessness in NSW is rare, brief and not repeated because people have a safe home and the support to keep it.

Stakeholders have told us they have concerns with particular policies and operations in the system:

- Using fixed-term tenure to encourage people to leave social housing. Data suggests it doesn't work. 35% of tenants remain in public housing until they die. Only 10% exit into private rental or homeownership. The reality is that people will only exit social housing if/when their circumstances improve, otherwise it's too risky to move from their social homes.
- The current management of anti-social behaviour and use of 3 strikes to manage problematic tenancies is complicated and difficult for staff and tenants to understand.

## Who are our tenants?

44%



Individuals were senior/elderly (55 and over or 45 and over if Aboriginal)

10%



of individuals were youth 16 to 24

19%



Individuals were children 15 and under

22%



Individuals on a Disability support pension (primary income)

59%



single person households

12%



Single with dependent(s) under 18

14%



Aboriginal households

Source: Historical Commissioning Dataset (2023 and 2024 preliminary). CHP/ACHP data is not currently available. Data as at June 2024. Includes Homes NSW managed tenancies (includes AHO owned).

## Service delivery across social landlords

Homes NSW values the multi-provider system in NSW. There is diversity across providers including those who support women, young people or Aboriginal people, and different housing models such as cooperative housing.

We have heard the current multi-provider system is difficult to navigate and there is significant variation in service delivery across providers. There is a call for core policy standards for all providers, so that no customer is disadvantaged because they receive a service from one provider rather than another.

The policy areas that could be considered include:

- rent setting
- mutual exchange
- tenancy succession
- absence from a dwelling (for example when a tenant is in custody).

We all need to work together to develop ways to do these things consistently. We could implement these through contracting arrangements, appeal processes and regulations.

Developing baseline service standards would mean that in the future everyone would receive services that are accessible, culturally appropriate and trauma-informed, regardless of the service provider or social landlord.

This would need to build on existing measures, policies and legal protections such as those set out by the National Regulatory System for Community Housing, the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission, and the Australian Service Excellence Standards. Changes would need to be financially sustainable and practical to implement for service providers.

## Tell us

### Q3

What does great engagement with tenants and communities look like?

### Q4

Have we missed any challenges or possible reforms around customer-driven service?

### Q5

What changes do you think we should make to improve social housing access and tenancy management?

### Homes NSW is already making changes to service delivery across social landlords

We are:

- running workshops with stakeholders to understand the roles of different providers and work out how Homes NSW can collaborate more effectively with our partners.
- working with Legal Aid NSW to identify systemic legal issues that require policy change.



# More and better homes

Homes NSW has an opportunity to support the delivery of more housing across the state. We want to ensure the homes we fund or build are places that people enjoy living in.

## **We need houses built soon.**

Given the urgent need for housing, we need to use efficiencies (such as pattern book designs) to speed up delivery. However, this approach must be balanced with providing diverse housing options to meet the needs of tenants.

## **We need houses where people want to live and that are suitable.**

Delivery of new homes should reflect the areas of greatest need for housing, as well as identifying areas with the best access to services and public transport, and the most suitable environments. This will ensure future communities are near the services they need while minimising the risks of being impacted by bushfires, floods and heat.

## **We need homes to be appropriate for the people who live in them.**

Homes NSW is committed to ensuring our homes and services are accessible and appropriate for people with disability. We want to make sure that people with disability, as well as older people with mobility issues, do not have to wait longer to access a social housing property that meets their needs than people without accessibility requirements.

## **There is more money for this.**

The *Building Homes for NSW* program will deliver new homes and improve general maintenance and repairs of our portfolio.

Homes NSW has introduced a new one-stop Maintenance Hub to improve outcomes for tenants with repairs issues. In addition, we are investing \$202.6 million to fund a critical maintenance program for Aboriginal Housing to repair and upgrade homes, as part of genuine action to Close the Gap.

## **We need to work with others.**

Homes NSW is working closely with the Commonwealth Government to maximise the opportunity to grow social and affordable housing in NSW. This includes delivering 1,500 social housing dwellings and restoring over 300 previously uninhabitable social homes with \$601.1 million under the Social Housing Accelerator Payment (SHAP).

Homes NSW is also partnering with CHPs to secure funding under the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) to deliver new social and affordable housing.

## Setting targets

Homes NSW is interested in including targets in the final **Homes for NSW Plan** to drive accountability, transparency and activity to deliver homes across the system.

To do this, everyone must agree on what the system needs to look like to achieve the best outcomes in housing and homelessness.

The *Building Homes for NSW* program has produced targets for new supply such as:

- 8,400 new social homes over 4 years
- replace 2,200 dwellings that no longer meet the needs of those requiring housing support
- upgrade 33,500 properties
- over 50% of the new homes built will be prioritised for women and children fleeing family and domestic violence

To ensure these new and better homes meet the needs of the system and customers, we may also have to consider additional targets. For example:

- Setting a target for the amount of housing managed by Aboriginal housing providers could help build the community-controlled sector (a Closing the Gap priority reform area commitment). Of course, to achieve this the Aboriginal housing sector would require additional support and investment, which would have to come from other parts of the system.
- Setting targets for the allocation of new homes (such as for affordable and for social housing) could help improve the financial sustainability of the system.
- Setting targets around how the system works to house people experiencing homelessness could help meet the aim of making homelessness rare, brief and not repeated.

**‘The creation of Homes NSW is an opportunity to define clear outcomes and set targets with transparent measurement structures to support them.’**

— Stakeholder, Homes NSW formation consultation

## Working out how affordable housing and key worker housing fit in

We anticipate thousands of new affordable homes will be delivered in NSW in the near future, from NSW Government initiatives such as Transport Oriented Developments and planning reforms, and from Commonwealth programs such as the Housing Australia Future Fund and the National Housing Accord.

This growth means affordable housing will become more important within the system.

Unlike social housing, affordable housing is available to households earning up to a moderate income and there is no formal waitlist, regulation or compliance framework. We don't know how much affordable housing is currently in the system or who is living in it.

Affordable housing can improve the system's financial sustainability when it is allocated to moderate income tenants who can pay higher rents. Even then, affordable housing usually requires government subsidies.

However, there is a risk that people on low and very-low incomes will miss out on housing because providers need to select people with higher incomes to ensure their financial viability.

The rapid growth in affordable housing requires deep thought about its roles in the system and how to best achieve them. We also need to consider the individual and social benefits of mixed tenure communities.

### Homes NSW is already working in areas around targets

We are:

- developing resource allocation frameworks to guide the delivery of new supply
- reviewing our direct dealing policy to support timely delivery of new homes by our partners
- establishing new Homelessness and Housing Innovation Funds
- implementing a Modern Methods of Construction pilot to drive more cost-efficient housing delivery.

Monitoring the delivery of new affordable housing and ensuring it is managed in accordance with government guidelines is critical. There is also merit in considering how the individual and community benefits of affordable housing could apply to the public housing system.

Providers have asked Homes NSW to consider how we could adopt a portfolio management approach to the management of social and affordable homes. Particular homes would not be designated as affordable, rather, overall targets for social and affordable households would be contracted. The change would allow a tenant to stay in the same home if their financial position changed.

Key worker housing is designed to attract and retain workers where a lack of suitable housing is a barrier to service delivery. Traditionally, key worker housing has focused on ensuring regional and remote areas can get the staff they need for education, health and safety services.

### **Homes NSW is already examining affordable housing and key worker housing**

We are reviewing:

- the NSW Affordable Housing Guidelines to provide greater clarity and ensure consistency across all affordable housing programs. We need to ensure the guidelines will help us get where we want to be as the sector grows.
- regulatory requirements for affordable housing providers.
- current key worker housing programs and considering a new operating model for key worker housing in NSW.

## **Building strong and sustainable estate communities**

At present, estate renewal is primarily addressed via major redevelopment. We are considering a more strategic approach to the way we work in areas of concentrated social housing.

Not all areas need to be subject to large-scale renewal, demolition and redevelopment. We can broaden thinking around estate management to include community development work, upgrades and in-fill developments. This approach could apply to estates, as well as smaller communities or single high-rise buildings.

As more than 50,000 social homes are on estates, a more holistic focus could:

- ensure decision-making involves residents and considers their priorities, preferences and local needs
- extend the timeframes in which we think about renewal – longer horizons may enable communities to stay in place and shift between properties as they are upgraded.

## **Tell us**

# **Q6**

How do we make sure the homes we build in the next few years are the right ones to meet the current urgent need, and the needs of our customers in the long term?

# **Q7**

What changes should we make to ensure strong and sustainable estate communities?



# A system that works

‘Homes NSW needs to act as a central policy maker for social and affordable housing.’

— Stakeholder, Homes NSW formation consultation

Homes NSW takes seriously its role as the steward of the non-market system. We have already started to strengthen connections across the system.

We meet regularly with housing and homelessness industry peak bodies, and we are restructuring governance arrangements to make them more streamlined.

We also engage directly with our delivery partners, for example in seeking to develop a system-wide response to the opportunities presented by the Australian Government’s funding initiatives.

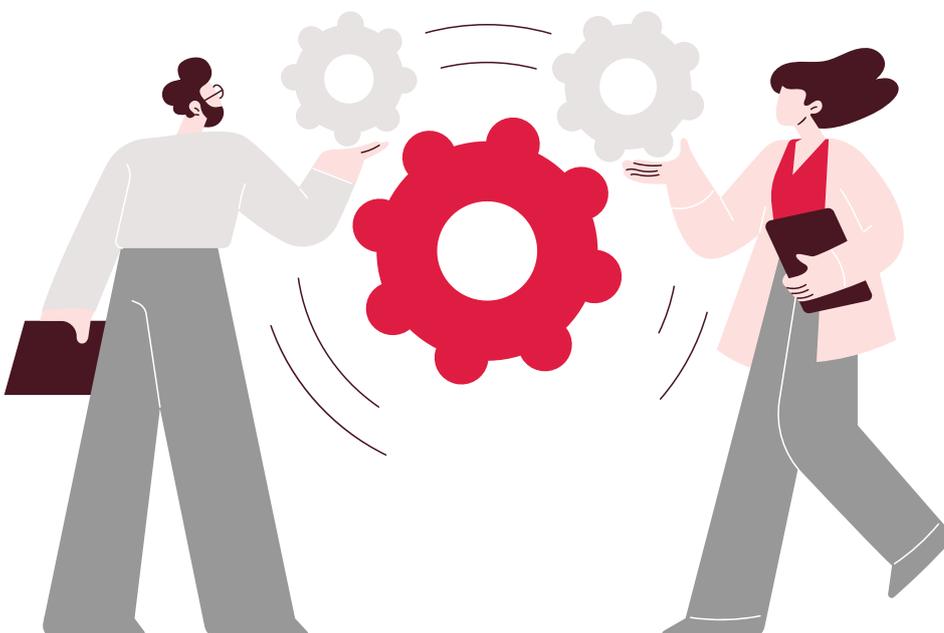
Homes NSW acknowledges that we occupy two distinct and potentially conflicting roles:

- system steward
- system participant.

As system steward, we want to provide clarity, allocate funding and enable all system participants to contribute to system-wide objectives.

Our participant role is diverse and includes:

- being the largest social landlord in the southern hemisphere
- managing key worker housing
- delivering temporary accommodation.



## Delivering homelessness reform

Homes NSW is leading the development of a whole-of-government 10-year [NSW Homelessness Strategy](#). It will work towards the vision of making NSW a place where homelessness is rare, brief and not repeated because people have a safe home and the support to keep it.

Homelessness causes and responses cut across all NSW Government departments, all levels of government, and the non-government sector, so we need to work together to develop and implement solutions.

The *Homelessness Strategy* will:

- Highlight the critical importance of a service-system response guided by person-centred and Housing First principles.
- Support prevention and diversion measures to move NSW away from crisis-driven responses that do not effectively help people avoid or exit homelessness.
- Consider the specific needs and contexts of NSW's diverse communities, including Aboriginal communities and young people who are over-represented and at greater risk of homelessness.

- Focus on local, responsive service delivery through a joined-up approach.
- Be guided by advice from people with lived experience and Aboriginal people and communities.

The *Homelessness Strategy* recognises that the homelessness system will require significant reform over the next decade to achieve and sustain this vision. Contracts for funded homelessness services end in June 2026. This is an opportunity to reshape what services we fund and how we fund them to improve outcomes for customers.

Homes NSW is working to design an approach that takes the first steps in the reform journey while retaining a diverse and viable sector. The approach will be developed in consultation with the sector and peaks, and informed by evidence, including interstate and international experiences.



## Working with Aboriginal communities

About 60% of Aboriginal households living in social housing live in housing managed by non-Aboriginal providers<sup>3</sup>.

We know Homes NSW needs to do more across the system and internally to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people.

The creation of Homes NSW brings with it the scope for greater self-determination for Aboriginal people and families across the NSW housing and homelessness system. This includes building the capacity of Aboriginal service providers such as:

- Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHPs)
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs)

Increasing partnership opportunities between Aboriginal services and Homes NSW, such as transferring management of publicly-owned properties to ACHPs, will also create more targeted housing for Aboriginal communities and improve the cultural competence of service delivery for Aboriginal people.

We also need to deliver Closing the Gap target 9A: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 87.5%. Work is being done to understand the causes of overcrowding and understand what housing issues contribute most to the wellbeing of Aboriginal tenants.

Homes NSW is committed to creating lasting progress in its reconciliation journey and to embed anti-racism principles in the way we work. We want Homes NSW to become a safer, more inclusive workplace that shines a light on the richness of First Nations cultures. We also want to enable staff to deliver better outcomes with Aboriginal people as they access the social housing and homelessness systems.

Homes NSW is fortunate to have an established Aboriginal staff reference group Ngarra, to help work with us to ensure our organisation and services are culturally safe. Making this happen requires us to create identified roles at different levels and across teams. We are also committed to ensuring appropriate and ongoing cultural training programs for all staff.

The Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) continues to deliver dedicated Aboriginal housing and tailored support solutions in response to community and sector needs. AHO is implementing its *Strong Family, Strong Communities* strategy and consulting through existing AHO forums.

We need to ensure the work led by the AHO is embedded across Homes NSW and reflected in the way we operate.

### **Homes NSW is already working with Aboriginal communities to achieve better outcomes**

We are:

- creating the Aboriginal Strategy Unit within Homes NSW.
- developing an Anti-Racism and Reconciliation Plan.

# 'Homes NSW needs to ensure there is self-determination in decision making.'

— Stakeholder, Homes NSW formation consultation



## Collaborative governance, measurement and partnership

Homes NSW is interested in working with our partners and customers to define the housing and homelessness outcomes we want to achieve and design a system that achieves them.

We need to understand the different roles of providers in the system and support growth in our respective strengths and capabilities.

You have told us that we need:

- Better governance systems for housing and homelessness forums to problem solve together and discuss how we can best achieve our shared vision collaboratively.

### Homes NSW is already working on how we work with our partners

We:

- have established a new approach to engagement with sector peaks to ensure co-design of policy and strategy across Homes NSW.
- are reviewing key system policies in consultation with the sector, peak bodies and government agencies.

- to have agreed measures captured and reported on by all system partners
- consistent programs, funding and contracting arrangements.

We know that our systems place a significant administrative burden on our partners, and we would like to work collaboratively to reduce these. This could include developing principles for contracting arrangements such as:

- not creating unnecessary burdens on our partners
- providing ongoing or long-term funding where possible, so our partners can get on with delivering services rather than spending time reapplying for money
- progressively scaling up contracts for bigger and more sophisticated delivery
- providing enough lead time to allow organisations to partner with others or leverage existing projects to deliver increasingly complex projects
- appropriately and proportionately allocating risk between our partners and us, to recognise our partnership and to facilitate the growth and financial viability of the community housing industry.

Tell us

## Q8

What actions would make the biggest impact in creating a housing and homelessness system that works?

## Q9

What actions would make the biggest impact to increase self-determination for Aboriginal people and families across the NSW housing and homelessness system?

## Q10

What are the risks and opportunities in developing an agreed set of system-wide measures to track progress against the priorities and objectives?



# 3

## The non-market housing and homelessness system



# Social housing

Social housing is the largest part of the non-market system.

Social housing is secure, affordable housing for people on very-low and low incomes who have a housing need. This is the largest part of the non-market system. In NSW, there are around 155,000 social housing properties.

Social housing includes:

- public housing managed by Homes NSW and the Aboriginal Housing Office
- community housing managed by not-for-profit, non-government registered community housing organisations.

Homes NSW supports this multi-provider approach because of its capacity to increase the scale of delivery, draw on additional sources of funding and other resources, deliver greater product and service variation and specialisation, and encourage innovation.

The amount of social housing as a proportion of the housing market has steadily declined over recent decades. This means fewer housing options are available for people on lower incomes.

In NSW:



a third of households live in a home they own without a mortgage



a third live in a home they own with a mortgage



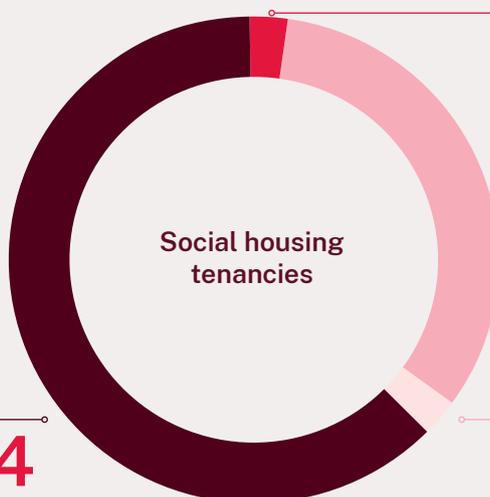
a third live in private rental

# 4.7%

social housing makes up just 4.7% of all NSW households

# 147,705

Total social housing tenancies



Public housing (PH)

# 92,124

# 3,604

Aboriginal housing managed by Homes NSW (AHO)

# 48,328

Community housing (CHPs)

# 3,649

Aboriginal community housing (ACHPs)

# The homelessness system

## A wide range of services work to prevent and respond to homelessness in NSW.

These include services for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, crisis and temporary accommodation, and a range of other accommodation and support services. This system operates alongside other government support systems including health, child protection, education, corrections, aged care, disability, and income support.

The Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) program is a key NSW Government response to homelessness, supporting people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Services include:

- early intervention
- outreach
- case management
- links to education and training
- provision of crisis and transitional accommodation with tailored supports.

The SHS program's primary objective is to ensure people who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness are supported to achieve safe and stable housing in the community.



# Affordable housing and key worker housing

## Affordable housing

Affordable housing is housing available to very-low to moderate income households where rent is discounted or set against household income, so households can meet other basic living costs.

## Key worker housing

Government key worker housing is provided to attract and retain workers where the lack of suitable housing is a barrier to service delivery, productivity and service outcomes.

The focus for key worker housing is locations with hard-to-fill roles across core education, health and safety services.



# Where does public funding come from for the non-market system?

The NSW and Australian Government share the cost of funding the non-market system.

In 2023-24:

- the NSW Government spent \$892 million on homelessness and social housing
- the Australian Government contributed \$516 million through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement.

Social housing needs to be subsidised by government because rent is linked to income.

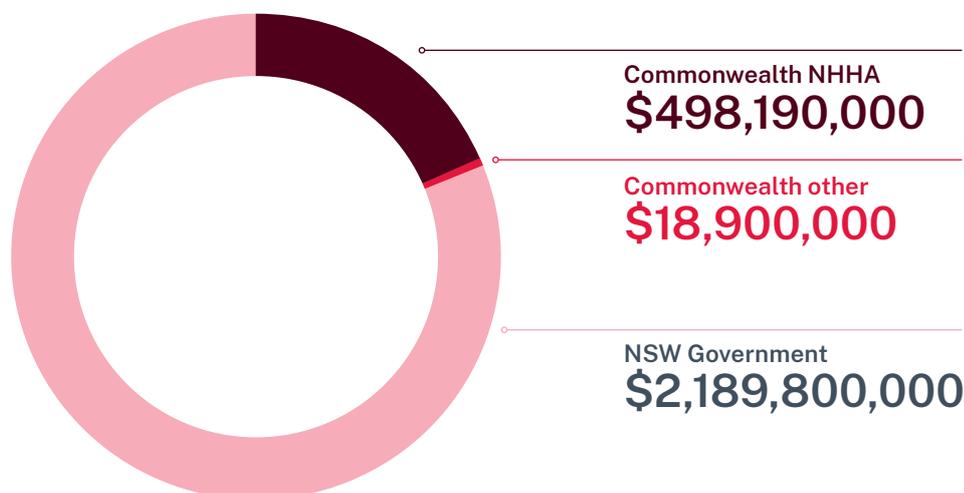
Across the Homes NSW portfolio, rent is around 42% of market rent<sup>4</sup>, which is not enough to cover operating costs including capital maintenance.



NSW has as much social housing as Queensland, ACT and Victoria combined

## Total spending on housing and homelessness FY22-23

Source: Department of Communities and Justice, Aboriginal Housing Office and NSW land and housing corporation accounts



# 4

## How to provide feedback



### We welcome your input into the *Homes for NSW Plan*.

We want to know what you think of the draft vision, priorities and suggested reforms.

We encourage you to respond to the questions we have asked in this document or provide your own feedback.

To learn more you can:

- Register for our webinar on Monday 9 December, 12 pm to 1 pm, where you will hear from us and can ask questions [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw-plan](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw-plan).

To provide your input and feedback you can:

- contribute in writing. Send your views to: [theplan@homes.nsw.gov.au](mailto:theplan@homes.nsw.gov.au)
- take our guided submission survey. Access the survey at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw-plan](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw-plan)

Together, we can work to ensure everyone has access to a decent home and support when they need it.

We can do this by making sure we get the *Homes for NSW Plan* right.

#### Endnotes

1. Based on 2016 Census data and removing the portion of social housing tenants that are included in the Small Area Housing Assistance Need (SAHAN) model.
2. In 2023-24, 83% of public housing allocations were from the priority list. This is higher than CHPs (65%) and AHO (63%) according to internal Homes NSW data.
3. This is an estimate as at 30 June 2023, because exact numbers on unfunded ACHP dwellings are not reported to DCJ. The estimate is based on counting rules previously agreed with AHO. It excludes affordable, crisis and transitional housing managed by community housing providers.
4. Internal Homes NSW data 30 June 2024.

