



Fix Social Housing Now

18 November 2014

The NSW Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is calling for significant reforms to tenancy management in social housing, in a report tabled in Parliament today.

The Committee's 18 recommendations address several long-standing and significant problems affecting the cost and accountability of social housing in NSW.

Committee Chair Jonathan O'Dea MP said, "While the new minister, Gabrielle Upton, and the Department of Family and Community Services are working commendably to resolve key issues, the facts paint a disturbing picture."

The Committee expressed surprise at the appalling state of performance measurement and reporting across the social housing sector.

"Decision making depends on robust data," Mr O'Dea said. "Without it, we can't know whether public funds are spent effectively, who the better housing service providers are, and if tenants are receiving the right levels of support."

Areas of particular urgency include:

- Better protecting tenants from anti-social and criminal behaviour.
- Closing known loopholes contributing to abuse of public funding.
- Identifying opportunities to innovate, particularly from the community sector.
- Strengthening tenant economic independence and reducing reliance, to make sure the social housing safety net is not a life-long, intergenerational trap.
- Facilitating further research in a series of critical areas.
- Continuing to replace high-value, high-cost public housing stock with lower cost stock to increase overall available volume.

"Handled well, selling one high-value, high-maintenance property releases funds for three to seven new properties. This reduces the waiting list of vulnerable families," Mr O'Dea said.

Further information and contact:

Committee website: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/publicaccounts

Jonathan O'Dea MP, Committee Chair, on 0418 241 500