

Submission

No 51

Outsourcing Community Service Delivery

Name: The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP

Position: Minister for Housing and
Minister for Homelessness

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THE HON BRENDAN O'CONNOR MP

Minister for Housing
Minister for Homelessness

BR12-000310

Mr Kevin Anderson MP
Chair
Community Services Committee
Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Anderson

Thank you for your letter of 6 March 2012 inviting me to make a submission to the Inquiry into Outsourcing Service Delivery being undertaken by the New South Wales Community Services Committee.

I understand that the Committee is inquiring into the devolution and outsourcing of housing, disability and home care service delivery from government to the non-government sector. I would like to make the Committee aware of two very important national initiatives in my portfolio areas of housing and homelessness where the Commonwealth Government is working with state and territory governments to ensure the quality of services being provided by non-government organisations and provide assurance for funders and the public.

Under the National Affordable Housing Agreement and the Nation Building and Jobs Plan National Partnership Agreement, Commonwealth and state and territory governments have committed to enhancing the capacity and growth of the not-for-profit housing sector supported by a national regulatory system.

Consistent with the National Affordable Housing Agreement and Nation Building and Jobs Plan, the Commonwealth and state and territory housing ministers have agreed in principle to introduce national regulation of community housing providers by way of national uniform legislation, to be introduced initially in New South Wales and either applied or adopted by other jurisdictions. I would like to acknowledge the important role played by New South Wales housing officials in developing the National Regulatory System which is to be introduced nationally by early 2013.

The purpose of the National Regulatory System for Community Housing is to provide a consistent regulatory environment to support the growth and development of the community housing sector and to reduce the regulatory burden for housing providers operating across jurisdictions. National standards will cover the areas of tenant and housing services, housing assets, community engagement, governance, probity, management and financial viability.

Regulation of the not-for-profit community housing sector will be further assisted through the introduction by the Commonwealth Government of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission in October 2012. The regulatory focus of the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission is on improving governance, accountability and transparency for not-for-profit organisations across all sectors, whereas the focus of the National Regulatory System is on determining adherence to agreed national performance standards relating specifically to the delivery of housing assistance. Housing officials are working with Treasury and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission Taskforce to ensure that both systems can work effectively without unnecessary regulatory duplication.

The Commonwealth Government is working with states and territories, service providers and people experiencing homelessness to develop a Homelessness National Quality Framework to improve quality and integration of services delivered to people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. The intention of the framework is to ensure a minimum level of service quality across the national homelessness sector, embed a continuous quality approach within service operations and provide a level of assurance to funders, clients and other sectors.

It is envisaged that the Council of Australian Governments will agree to a preferred model of homelessness quality framework in August 2012, with implementation to commence shortly afterwards. Regardless of the model implemented, the framework will have the capacity to recognise other quality systems and standards such as the New South Wales Good Practice Guidelines.

Once again, thank you for inviting me to make a submission to the Inquiry.

Yours Sincerely

Brendan O'Connor