

**Submission  
No 44**

**OPTIONS TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO EXISTING AND ALTERNATE  
ACCOMMODATION TO ADDRESS THE SOCIAL HOUSING SHORTAGE**

**Name:** Mr Isaac Reed

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My name is Isaac Reed and I work for a registered NDIS organisation doing Support Coordination. I represent an organisation which assists NDIS participants to engage and maintain services for which they are funded.

I live and work in Northern NSW (Ballina - 2478).

The role I have often means I engage with youth (over 17) or older people in my community who need to find housing. They have options however, these are far and few between and the process to apply is challenging. Many have poor literacy, are at risk in the community (drugs and alcohol), at risk of becoming homeless due to family tensions and a lack of education within the family and also due to their mental health requiring specific housing options.

The NDIS offer the options of SIL (group homes) or SDA (specialised developments to meet specific complex needs) and ILOs (host families, private rentals, living with friends etc). These are good options but SDA is a long process and council need to approve the developments (can take years from start to finish) it also means that if you are SDA approved you are then removed from the NSW Housing list leaving you homeless until the SDA is developed. SIL is an option for many but we lack these developments as well and as it is a shared occupancy it is unsafe for residents when someone with behaviours of concern and complex mental health needs move in (often they are not allowed due to the risk they present).

Any options to assist people in our community, specifically those most at risk, with finding housing would be welcomed in the Northern Rivers.

I believe that solutions to our housing crisis rely on developments to be passed through councils faster and with less barriers. The delay at council stage is staggering. Also, I believe simplifying the process for applying to NSW Housing would allow more people (specifically those with mental health) to get a faster service. In Ballina the government funds more than 5 agencies to explore housing options in an area where there isn't any. Development is the only way forward. Development of existing and unused building would be perfect. It creates housing opportunities; beautifies the town to not have derelict buildings; provides an income opportunity to the owner and could help resolve and reduce some of the homelessness in this area. I would fully support this inquiry into look at this as an option.