

24 September 2009



Legislative Council  
**Standing Committee on Social Issues**  
**Low cost rental accommodation**

The Chair of the Social Issues Committee, the Hon Ian West MLC, today tabled the Committee's Report of its inquiry into homelessness and low cost rental accommodation.

Mr West said "When public housing was first introduced in Australia it provided a 'helping hand' to many working Australians. Times have changed and these people are no longer eligible for public housing, but some working Australians remain in need of assistance if they are to avoid becoming homeless."

"The main message we heard is that there is a need for more affordable housing that is targeted to meet the needs of low to moderate income households. These are often key workers in our communities, providing health care, hospitality and retail services, yet they cannot afford to live close to the communities which they serve."

"What is needed is a change in approach. It is a fundamental right of all people to have access to food, clothing and shelter as well as safety, education and employment opportunities. As the Prime Minister has stated, reducing homelessness is 'everyone's responsibility.'"

Mr West said "The not for profit sector has made a valuable contribution to addressing the needs of those in housing stress. To provide a place where tenants can create a home it is essential for governments at all levels to work co-operatively with the non-government sector, pooling resources and expertise to overcome the effects of previous underfunding."

"Although we heard of great and increasing levels of unmet need we also heard success stories and met with people who had had their lives turned around because they have been given an opportunity to create and sustain a home. As a Committee we are heartened by this. With the new initiatives put in place by the State and Australian Governments, we can see that there is an opportunity to increase both the number and quality of affordable housing tenancies for low to moderate income households. Governments need be vigilant in assessing the success of these initiatives, listen to the not for profit housing and support service providers, as well as low to moderate income Australians, and work together with them at a local level to provide well co-ordinated, funded and targeted, long-term solutions."

Electronic copies of the report can be obtained from the Committee's website at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/socialissues](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/socialissues). Hard copies are available on request from the Committee Secretariat on 02 9230 3504 or email [socialissues@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:socialissues@parliament.nsw.gov.au).

*For further comment please contact the Hon Ian West MLC,*

*Committee Chair, on 9230 2126*

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