



Churches Community Housing

Legislative Council – Standing Committee on Social Issues – Unanswered Questions

Hearing Thursday 11 June 2009

1. *What do you regard as the biggest barriers to:*
 - a. *Growth in the number of low-cost rental accommodation properties*
 - b. *The speed of delivery of new low-cost rental properties*
 - c. *How can these be addressed?*

The speed of approval and notification of the successful tenders for the NRAS and Social Housing Growth Funds EOI's. This process is extremely slow and hinders the planning processes of the tendering organisations in proceeding with their development proposals. Most church proposals for additional affordable housing stock are part of larger developments by the church agency, if they are ready to proceed with their basic proposal and need to wait for the outcome as to whether they proceed with a smaller self funded development or whether they have been successful with their EOI tender enabling an expanded development, this delay not only impacts on construction timeframes but also on the cash flow and funding implications for the total project.

Once approval is confirmed most churches and church agencies have the necessary skills and contacts to proceed quickly to the building development stage.

There are now available a number of well engineered modular housing options which can speed up the delivery of low-cost rental housing. These need to be investigated by State Housing Authorities.

2. *Your organisation has been selected as a 'growth provider'. What is the significance of this and how will it impact on your ability to provide affordable housing?*

As an organisation we had expected a steady flow of stock transfers to our supported housing company; however this has not been the case to date. (These stock transfers would be part of the current stock transfer program to 'growth providers'; however few have been received to our supported housing company as they are generally tenanted properties.) If there is a steady flow of generalist housing it will enable the organisation to be more viable as it will enable a flow of supported housing tenants exiting to generalist housing once they no longer need support or only require minimal support. With long term leases and possible title transfer the organisation would be able to borrow additional funds to develop new affordable housing.

3. *What would assist your organisation to better meet the needs of very low, low and moderate income earners, both for housing and associated outreach services?*

Our current support partners and potential new support partners are willing to provide the necessary support, our main issue is lack of stock transfers to a specialist, and 'niche' supported housing company. With stock transfers our organisation will be able to better meet the needs of those on very low through to moderate incomes.

As I have previously stated a continuing partnership vehicle either the same as or very similar to the current National Rental Affordable Scheme (NRAS) will enable the stock of affordable housing to continue to be increased via partnerships with the church sector providers; who are the bulk of the larger charities in Australia. These people have access to property and most are willing to develop affordable housing partnerships.

Derek R Yule

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