



Thursday 10 April 2014

Madeline Foley
Director, Select Committee on Social Public and Affordable Housing Secretariat
Parliament of NSW, Legislative Council

By email: socialhousing@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Foley –

Re: Inquiry into social, public and affordable housing

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft transcript of evidence from the Federation's appearance before the Select Committee, and to provide further information in relation to the questions taken on notice and the supplementary question.

Transcript:

I have attached a copy of the draft transcript of evidence, with a small number of corrections marked, in accordance with your letter of 20 March 2014.

Leveraged properties:

In relation to the question taken on notice regarding leveraged properties, I can advise the Committee that the figure quoted in our submission, and discussed at the hearing, is sourced from the Registrar of Community Housing. The Registrar of Community Housing publishes two aggregate reports each year: an Annual Statement of Performance and a mid-year Sector Snapshot. Both of these reports provide updated information about the number of community housing dwellings owned and/or managed by registered community housing providers. The number of community housing dwellings owned by registered community housing providers includes properties leveraged from formal agreements between providers and the NSW Government, for example, under Nation Building packages, as well as any other properties owned by community housing providers and used for community housing purposes. The 2013 Sector Snapshot specifically reports on the number of dwellings developed/acquired by Class 1, 2 and 3 providers (the largest providers). The Annual Statement of Performance and Sector Snapshot are available on the Registrar's website: www.rch.nsw.gov.au

In addition, the 32 largest community housing providers report quarterly to the Community and Private Market Housing Division (CAPMH) of FACS—Housing NSW on a range of indicators, including, where applicable, their performance against agreed leverage targets. All community housing providers which received properties under the Nation Building program are included in this reporting process. This information is reported to CAPMH for monitoring purposes and is not published externally as it is considered commercial-in-confidence.

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Community housing providers often report on their progress with delivering leveraged properties in their annual reports, which are available on their websites. Providers do not report to the Federation on the progress of their projects.

I can further advise the Committee that CAPMH has commenced a project to evaluate the delivery of affordable housing projects, which includes the delivery of properties leveraged under the Nation Building program as well as other affordable housing properties. The project will document providers' delivery of affordable housing projects to date, explore ways of strengthening capacity in procurement and delivery, and identify suitable procurement models and opportunities for further growth.

Aboriginal housing:

In relation to the question taken on notice regarding the cost of Aboriginal housing, I believe that the Committee will find the most useful source of further information to be the Aboriginal Housing Office, which is part of the Department of Family and Community Services.

Disability housing:

In relation to the question taken on notice regarding housing for people with disability, I can advise the Committee that according to the 2014 Report on Government Services over 70 percent of new community housing tenancies in NSW in 2012/13 were allocated to households with special needs. This category includes, but is not limited to, households where at least one member receives a disability support pension. In addition, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 2013 report on Housing Assistance reports that 35 percent of all community housing households nationally include a member with a disability. I have also attached four case studies of current NSW community housing providers working in partnership with the disability sector to increase housing supply for people with disability.

The National Disability Insurance Agency has not yet released its discussion paper on housing issues. However, I can advise that the papers presented to the Community Housing Federation of Australia's recent forum on housing, disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme are available on the organisation's website via the dedicated clearinghouse for housing and disability issues: www.chfa.com.au/content/accessible-housing-housing-disability-and-ndis These papers include a presentation by the Chair of the National Disability Insurance Agency, Bruce Bonyhady. The website will include the Agency's discussion paper, when available, as well as an expanding range of relevant resources.

Tenanted property transfers:

In relation to the question taken on notice regarding a program of tenanted transfers, I have attached "Tenanted Property Transfers: Towards a community housing industry preferred approach to managing future property transfers in NSW", the Federation's recent report into the issue. The report includes discussion of the rationale for transferring properties from public to community housing.

Advisory council:

In relation to the question taken on notice regarding the re-establishment of an advisory committee, I can advise the Committee the Federation believes that the NSW Government would benefit from the establishment of a Ministerial Advisory Council for Community Housing. The role of the Council would be to provide advice to the Minister about strategic directions for the community housing industry, and practical implementation of growth and diversification strategies. While the Minister responsible for housing would appoint the members of the Council, the Council's advice would also be relevant to Ministers responsible for planning, disability and health as well as central agencies such as treasury. The Council would have a role in advising Cabinet on the role of housing in relation to these portfolio areas and specifically the relevance of community housing's strategic directions to mitigating the effects of housing unaffordability.

Membership of the Council would include representatives of the community housing industry including providers and industry peak bodies. Membership of the Council would also include representatives from other industries which partner or provide services to community housing, including finance, building and development, superannuation, disability, homelessness, relevant support services, business services, urban development and planning, major local government authorities, churches, and aged care, as well as academics with relevant areas of expertise.

Social housing policy:

In relation to the supplementary question regarding the development of the social housing policy, I can advise the Committee that the Federation has received assurances from the Minister for Family and Community Services, the Hon. Pru Goward, and her office, as well as Government personnel, that the social housing policy will be released for public consultation. The Federation looks forward to engaging with the Minister and Department on the policy as soon as possible, and to coordinating the community housing industry's response to the policy.

Yours sincerely –

Dr Lucy Burgmann
CEO
NSW Federation of Housing Associations