



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL, PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

MEDIA RELEASE

MORE HOUSING URGENTLY NEEDED

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

8 September 2014

The Select Committee on Social, Public and Affordable Housing has recommended a suite of reforms aimed at growing and enhancing the social, public and affordable housing sector. The reforms stem from the fundamental principle that everyone should have a place to call home.

In particular, the report recommends the NSW Government partner with community housing providers to increase social and affordable housing, in light of evidence highlighting increasing demand for social housing assistance, yet a critical shortage of properties.

The Chair of the committee, the Hon Paul Green MLC, said “With over 58,000 people on the social housing wait list and demand increasing, it is vital that the NSW Government continue to engage with the community housing sector to increase social and affordable housing. If more public housing properties are transferred to community housing providers via long term leases, community housing providers will be able to raise additional finance and income over the assets, thereby allowing them to build more social and affordable housing properties”.

The report also highlighted concerns related to the sale of certain public housing properties, particularly in the absence of a clear social housing policy or framework. The Chair stated “It is critically important that the priority be to develop new supply of social, public and affordable housing. Selling properties to address funding shortfalls and the maintenance backlog is not sustainable. The NSW Government needs a clear direction for social housing, and it should start by releasing its social housing policy, as recommended last year by the Auditor-General”.

The report also outlined serious concerns about the management of maintenance for public housing properties. The Chair commented “Given the extent of tenant dissatisfaction on this issue, it is essential that the NSW Government commission an independent review into the management of maintenance, focusing on improved transparency, accountability and responsiveness”.

The report recommended a greater focus on the integration of social services with housing. The Chair stated “Housing approaches that focus on addressing both housing and non-housing needs, such as accommodation with mental health support, are vital in helping tenants to maintain their tenancy and achieve broader positive outcomes”.

The summary of key issues and recommendations from the inquiry is attached. The report is on the committee’s website: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/socialhousing. Hard copies are available on request.

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For further information please contact the Committee Chair the Hon Paul Green MLC, on 9230 3484.