

## **INQUIRY INTO SOCIAL, PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Organisation:** Officers of Albury City Council

**Date received:** 28/02/2014

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27 February 2014

The Honourable Sophie Cotsis  
Shadow Minister for Housing  
NSW Parliament  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Madam

### **Parliamentary Inquiry into Social, Public and Affordable Housing**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the abovementioned parliamentary inquiry.

The comments summarised below are provided by Council staff based on their interactions with local service providers, housing networks and customers who access Council services. The comments within this submission have not been formally endorsed by Council.

- Local Aboriginal agencies and services in Albury have researched and identified rising levels of young people who are living away from their families due to family breakdown or violence and the need to provide supported and safe accommodation for young Aboriginal people, so they can develop appropriate lifeskills, continue their education and links with the wider community.
- There is a need for increased case management services for people with a mental illness to assist them manage their tenancy and access appropriate health services within the community in order to reduce their risk of becoming homeless/or becoming evicted and ensure they can maintain aspects of their tenancy and be responsible for the upkeep of their home. Better collaboration and liaison between health, justice and housing services are needed to meet the complex needs of people exiting justice facilities and mental health facilities.
- Council receives many requests throughout the year to provide assistance to older people in respect to repairs to their home or maintenance of their lawns and gardens. Whilst Homecare Packages support older people living independently in their own home, the packages do not usually extend to maintaining the exterior of a person's house and many older people rely on family members or paid contractors. People residing in Public Housing often become visible to Council through neighbourhood complaints relating to the outside condition of their home and it would be beneficial if the Department had a subsidised scheme available for occupants

to access ground maintenance contractors at reduced prices, particularly for older people and people with a disability.

- Council is currently investigating with local housing services improved responses and facilities for people who are presenting either at Council or in the community homeless. Often people need access to a stable environment before they can engage with services, and whilst emergency accommodation can be provided to people presenting homeless, the service is limited in its after hour service in terms of meeting the client's immediate social and individual needs. Council is currently investigating requests by service providers to provide people who are experiencing homeless access to storage, showering and clothes washing facilities.
- Many skilled migrants on regional working visas are accessing Council for a range of services, including housing services. Council staff attempt to help these newcomers access rental accommodation, but because they have not prior tenancy history and are either working part time or seeking employment, are not eligible for rental housing. As they are not Australian residents, they cannot access public housing.
- The importance of local housing, community and welfare services working collaboratively to identify and address housing issues and gaps in services is fundamental to providing better outcomes for families. Council values local network meetings such as the Triple H Forum that is collective made up of local government and not for profit organisations that have an interest in housing issues. Such forums allow ideas to be raised and acted upon, resources to be shared, and a focus on local issue, driven at the local level. Over years, the forum has successfully targeted key housing concerns and made important inroads into linking local real estate property managers with specialist housing services to help preserve tenancies and increase knowledge of local housing support services available within the community. We commend the organisations whom are committed to this forum on their successful outcomes.

Best wishes in undertaking your inquiry into social, public and affordable housing. We look forward to the findings of the study being made available in due course. Should you require further information, please don't hesitate to contact me

Yours faithfully

Maralee Vogel

**TEAM LEADER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**