



## MEDIA RELEASE

15 September 2020

### **Housing survey shows at least 12,500 shovel ready affordable homes waiting for government to say go**

Australia could start beating the recession immediately by investing in social housing construction, with more than 12,500 new affordable homes ready to be built across the country if a Federal stimulus package included in the October 6 budget, new data released today reveals.

The survey by the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) shows not for profit housing providers have shovel ready projects that would deliver 12,500 new homes and almost 7000 jobs within the next five years.

More **6,000 new homes could begin construction within the next 6 months** if they are supported by Federal Government investment.

Momentum can be maintained over the medium and longer terms, with project commencements identified delivering:

- Nearly 3,500 new homes starting March – September 2021 (6-12 months from now)
- Over 1,500 new homes starting September 2021-March 2022 (12-18 months; and
- A further 1,500 new homes starting from March 2022 (18 months or more).

CHIA CEO Wendy Hayhurst said the data shows Australian community housing providers are ready to partner with government to help re-start the economy and deliver vital housing for vulnerable Australians struggling with housing costs.

“Almost half the shovel ready projects identified by community housing providers could begin construction within the next six months with government support as part of a much needed stimulus package,” Ms Hayhurst said.

“A third of the projects are in regional Australia, where local communities desperately need construction related jobs to keep their local economies going.”

Ms Hayhurst said based on modelling by SGS Economics for the full Social Housing Acceleration and Renovation Program (SHARP), shovel ready projects in the pipeline could support 7,000 full time equivalent jobs both in metro and regional areas.

“If governments invested in the full four-year SHARP program to build 30,000 social housing homes up to 18,000 full-time equivalent jobs would be supported each year.

“During 2021-22 when we anticipate the construction industry being impacted the most from reduced migration, SHARP could support up to both on-site and in the wider building services industry.”

“Our survey shows that many of these homes are ready to be built right now and would create the immediate hit the economy is crying out for.”



Everybody's Home campaign spokesperson Kate Colvin said investment in not for profit community housing was sound fiscal and social policy.

“Socially we are on the precipice of unprecedented levels of housing stress and homelessness in Australia – and renters are at the very frontline of that crisis,” Ms Colvin said.

“Rental affordability has already halved for families surviving on a minimum wage or who have lost jobs because of COVID-19. The current figures tell us that we have 429,000 loans deferred, 3.3 million Australians on JobKeeper and an effective unemployment rate of more than 11 per cent.

“When mortgage holidays and rental moratoriums are lifted and government welfare payments “tapered”, the true face of rental stress and homelessness will be revealed.

“The good news is that the interest rates on government bonds are at historic lows – circa 0.25%, making investment in this vital infrastructure enormously good value.”

Ms Colvin said Australia has a rich and ongoing history of the Federal Government collaborating with the states and territories and using social housing construction to create jobs and meet Australia's housing needs.

“It happened after WW2, it happened after Cyclone Tracey and the Global Financial Crisis. Interest rates on government bonds are at historic lows. Australia needs our Federal Government to show that leadership again,” Ms Colvin said.

Dwelling commencements					
	Within 6 months	6-12 months	12-18 months	18 months to 5 years	Total
Metropolitan areas	4516	3055	880	957	9408
Non-metropolitan areas	1620	353	613	539	3125
<b>Australia-wide</b>	<b>6136</b>	<b>3408</b>	<b>1493</b>	<b>1496</b>	<b>12533</b>

To see state data go to <https://www.communityhousing.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CHIA-shovel-ready-projects-survey.pdf>

Media Contact: Jenny Stokes [jenny.stokes@essentialmedia.com.au](mailto:jenny.stokes@essentialmedia.com.au) or 0478 504 280