

Media Release

Tuesday, 16 February 2021

ONE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVIDERS REBRANDS AND RELAUNCHES AS A NATIONAL ENTITY

As of 18 February 2021, Access Housing will officially change its name to Housing Choices Western Australia (Housing Choices WA), as the merger between Access Housing and Housing Choices Australia reaches completion.

The two organisations officially merged on 1 July 2020, paving the way for Housing Choices to become one of the largest community housing providers in the country. In Western Australia, Housing Choices WA has 1,850 properties with over 3,000 tenants and a total asset value of over \$175 million. Since the merger, Housing Choices (including WA) is now responsible for the management of nearly 7,000 social and affordable homes across five states in Australia, with assets valued in excess of \$900 million and with annual revenue of nearly \$70 million.

The merger's completion puts the Housing Choices Group of Companies in a leading position to work with the WA Government and other industry stakeholders to help resolve the State's current housing crisis.

Western Australia is facing one of the most significant housing shortages in the country, with 15,700 households currently on the social housing waitlist. The vacancy rate in the private rental market is now around 0.8%, whereas normally the vacancy rate should sit at roughly 3%.

The State's housing shortage will continue to be exacerbated in the next few months, when the moratorium on rent increases and evictions provided due to COVID-19 will end in March 2021.

As one of the leading affordable housing providers in Australia, Housing Choices will be able to draw on a wealth of inter-State housing expertise and knowledge from across the business to assist the WA Government in resolving the housing crisis.

Housing Choices WA General Manager, Community Housing, Natalie Sangalli, says the organisation's national breadth of experience, and best practice in property and tenancy management ensures Housing Choices is well equipped and ready to assist the Government with innovative solutions to provide housing for people on low incomes, through the 10-15% increase in market rent that is expected to hit in the coming months.

"Now that the merger is complete and we have welcomed Housing Choices WA to our Group of entities, it's about leveraging what we as a large, national organisation

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can do to help the WA Government during a critical time in the State's housing shortfall," says Michael Lennon, Managing Director, Housing Choices.

Housing Choices WA looks forward to working with the Government on bringing to life its key strategies, including the WA Housing Strategy, and the 10 Year Strategy to End Homelessness, which incorporates two Common Ground facilities; one in the inner-city and one in Mandurah. Housing Choices' Common Ground program's success in South Australia, where it currently operates in both Adelaide and Port Augusta, will be leveraged and drawn upon to ensure the success of the Common Ground program in WA.

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