



MEDIA RELEASE

Sector rejects Mr Falinski's uninformed and prejudiced comments about social and affordable housing

A coalition of affordable housing advocacy peak bodies has rejected the [comments made by Jason Falinski MP](#), chair of the Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue's Inquiry into housing affordability and supply in Australia, labelling them as uninformed and prejudiced. The Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA), Homelessness Australia, and National Shelter, object in the strongest terms to Mr Falinski's misrepresentation of the sector and disregard for the important contribution that affordable housing makes to the wellbeing of Australians in housing need.

Mr Falinski's statements at UDIA's National TV event on 9 September denigrating social and affordable housing come in the same week that the Women's Safety Summit issued a statement recognising that 'Affordable, accessible long-term housing..... is fundamental to the safety and recovery of victim-survivors and must be a priority.'

Jenny Smith, Chair of Homelessness Australia said, "every day, homelessness services are having to scramble to find safe places for women and the children to stay. We urgently need more investment in long term social housing options".

The Federal government has recognised the importance of social and affordable housing by setting up the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC). Affordable rental housing adds to housing supply, adds construction jobs and adds dollars in economic output.

Wendy Hayhurst, CEO at the Community Housing Industry Association said "Mr Falinski's comments are out of touch with official thinking. Only last week Infrastructure Australia recommended the design and implementation of programs to increase supply."

[The 2021 Australian Infrastructure Plan](#) called for all levels of government to invest in social and affordable rental housing, recognising that well-maintained and designed social housing provides many community benefits, supporting individual and societal wellbeing and productivity, and reducing costs in health and justice services.

"The OECD, led by former Finance Minister Cormann, has also recently [endorsed](#) the importance of social housing investment" Ms Hayhurst pointed out.

Adrian Pisarski, National Shelter head, said "Rents across Australia have increased by an average of 8.5% over the last five years, and by a whopping 22.9% in the regions. The Inquiry should look at

how to make all housing more affordable and available and social housing plays a vital role protecting low income and vulnerable families. Markets fail people on low incomes.”

The Inquiry committee must put the undersupply of social and affordable rental housing front and centre of their deliberations. Social and affordable rental housing can be a haven for women escaping violence, provide stability to help people recover from illness and act as a springboard into homeownership. It is crucial that all levels of government work collaboratively with the sector to address this most pressing of issues for Australians in housing need.

Contacts:

Wendy Hayhurst CEO, Community Housing Industry Association 0421 046 832

Jenny Smith, Chair, Homelessness Australia 0401-774-695

Adrian Pisarski, EO, National Shelter, 0417 975 270