

National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032

By email: nationalplanfeedback@dss.gov.au

Date: 3 March 2022

Dear Madam / Sir

Response to the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and their Children

The Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) is pleased to make this short response to the consultation on the National Plan to End Violence Against Women (hereafter the Plan).

At the workshops we attended, organised by Monash University, and in our written submission our concern was to ensure that the new plan adequately considered and addressed the housing needs of women and children experiencing violence.

The prominence given to affordable long-term housing provision in the statement from the delegates to the September 2021 National Summit on Women's Safety demonstrates that a safe home is widely recognised as a critical service response. As the statement noted it is 'fundamental to the safety and recovery of victim-survivors and must be a priority'. It is heartening then that the Plan reflects these concerns and incorporates high level aims, including ensuring access to social housing, and enhancing linkages between accommodation providers and services. Our understanding is that detailed action plans will follow, and that these will set out precise initiatives, together with associated targets and outcome measures.

On the basis that further work will be undertaken CHIA has confined our recommendations to two enhancements to the Plan.

1. Homelessness

Women who have experienced domestic and family violence are the largest group seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services. This is part of a longer-term trend with a 26% increase in households experiencing DFV seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services over a four year period from 2014 ¹

DFV is the single most common reason women and children become homeless in Australia, with those who have experienced family and domestic violence make up 41% of Specialist Homelessness

¹ [Australian-Homelessness-Monitor-2020.pdf \(launchhousing.org.au\)](#)

Services (SHS) clients in 2019–20.² More than half of these women (55.8%) required accommodation. Of these, almost one in four (24.3%) were not provided with services directly.

To recognise the extent of the problem the Plan should therefore include a specific measure in its list of prime targets, to reduce the number of women and children who experience homelessness as result of domestic and family violence.

2. The Plan should clearly set out how and when the detailed action plans will be produced. We strongly recommend that one is specifically developed to address housing actions.

Housing and homelessness representative bodies, state housing bodies, academics, financiers (such as the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation – NHFIC) and CHOs have not been brought into the Plan consultation process in any meaningful way thus far.

A housing action plan could be developed and its implementation overseen by an advisory panel drawing in representatives of these groups. Collectively they have a broad knowledge of current housing and homelessness practice / operations and possible solutions. Such a plan could inform the negotiation of the new 2023 national housing and homelessness agreement (NHHA).

As we noted in our first submission government investment in additional social and affordable housing remains (despite some recent State programs) insufficient to meet both the current shortfall and the projected growth in demand. There has been investment in short term crisis and transitional housing but not in move on options needed. Unless the Plan includes clear mechanisms to secure additional housing or devolves this to States and Territories, it is unlikely this will be delivered.

While more social and affordable housing is critical to success there are other examples of housing initiatives and ideas that could contribute to improving housing outcomes. These include a number of pilot housing projects to assist women to purchase and initiatives to enhance tenancy management practice including CHIA's own work to develop a community housing standard in responding to domestic and family violence. An action plan could bring together these disparate initiatives in a way that encourages sharing of knowledge and the adoption of best practice.

We look forward to being involved in the Plan's next steps.

Yours sincerely,



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² [Specialist homelessness services annual report, Clients who have experienced family and domestic violence - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](#)