



# Senate urged to pass \$10 billion housing fund

**EMBARGO: 6am, Tuesday 27 March 2023**

The nation's four peak housing and homelessness advocacy bodies are issuing a joint call for the Senate to pass a package of legislation that will begin tackling the housing crisis.

The joint call from the [Community Housing Industry Association](#), [National Shelter](#), [Homelessness Australia](#) and the [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Association](#) comes as Australia grapples with the worst housing crisis in decades.

Surging rents and rising interest rates are eroding household budgets. Last week's release of [ABS Census data showed a five per cent increase in the number of Australians experiencing homelessness](#), while UNSW City Futures Research Centre analysts have found [640,000 Australians are in housing stress with the number tipped to hit one million by 2041](#).

The National Shelter Rental Affordability Index showed a 14 per cent decline in rental affordability the last year, with an even steeper decline in affordability for lower income households.

This week, three pieces of legislation are before the Senate, the [Housing Australia Future Fund Bill 2023](#), [National Housing Supply and Affordability Council Bill 2023](#) and the [Treasury Laws Amendment \(Housing Measures No. 1\) Bill 2023](#).

Wendy Hayhurst, CEO of Community Housing Industry Association said the lack of affordable rental housing was restricting Australia's social and economic potential. "Existing policy settings have led us to where we are today. We need to get moving on building a better supply of social and affordable housing and these three pieces of legislation are important building blocks. We can strengthen them and provide additional resources in the years ahead but we need to get moving now."

Emma Greenhalgh, CEO of National Shelter said the housing market has failed to meet these challenges. "Vacancies have plummeted, rents have skyrocketed and people are paying the price. We badly need government investment and intervention and time is of the essence. This is a national crisis, action can not be deferred."

Kate Colvin, CEO of Homelessness Australia, said the nation needed a housing reset. "The package of laws before the Parliament will not be enough to fix the housing crisis alone, but they are critical to kick-starting a longer term response. We need the planning, co-ordination and financing in place to make sure this is the last housing crisis we face and for that reason, it's important that the Housing Australia Future Fund, Housing Australia and other key bodies get going now."

Ivan Simon, CEO of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Association stated that: "The needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have been ignored by governments. The extremely high levels of severe overcrowding in remote and non-remote communities continues to have negative impacts on



the health and well-being of our people. This also includes the standard of 'disrepair' of the current housing stock owned and or managed by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Housing Organisations. NATSIHA sees the current strategy, priorities and budget commitment of the Australian Government as the start, not the end of the process of addressing this challenge and therefore urges the government to clearly indicate how it proposes to resource the needs of our people in the longer term and that the monitoring, review and any amendments to the current proposed legislation will be actioned including any increases in the financial investments required".

**Interviews: Nick Lucchinelli 0422 229 032**