



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Territory housing challenge in spotlight**

***EMBARGO: Thursday, 30 March 2023,***

A symposium to be held in Darwin today will consider how national policy reforms and innovative finance models can address the NT's housing challenge, the toughest in the nation.

[Recent research by UNSW City Futures Research Centre](#) estimates that 21% of NT households currently face unmet housing needs, with 8,000 to 12,000 dwellings needed by 2041 to combat homelessness and deliver affordable homes for Territorians, including essential workers, vital for the Territory's economy. Adding to the challenge, the NT's population is expected to exceed 300,000 by 2030.

Today's symposium attended by 90 housing, policy, finance and planning industry experts aims to raise awareness of Commonwealth funding and partnership opportunities including the proposed Housing Australia Future Fund and the National Housing Accord. It will highlight that registered community housing providers are critical partners for the delivery of new social and affordable housing supply to meet demand.

The proposed Housing Australia Future Fund is a Commonwealth investment fund created to expand social and affordable housing. A new body, Housing Australia will administer the funding, while the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council will provide advice on spending proposals. The legislation is yet to pass through the Senate.

"The NT community housing sector is ready to partner with all three levels of Government, institutional finance and the private sector to leverage our value proposition and boost much needed affordable rental housing supply," said Karen Walsh, chair of the Community Housing Industry Association, NT. "Australia is one of the world's wealthiest nations and it is inconceivable that children are sleeping rough and families are living in their cars.

"We now have motivated governments and a capable and mobilised housing sector. We can make serious inroads to addressing this challenge."

Wendy Hayhurst, CEO of the Community Housing Industry Association, concurred. "Community housing providers have runs on the board for planning, building and managing housing for Australians on low and modest incomes. We offer the best return on the taxpayer's investment - our charitable status means we pay no GST or land tax, plus we reinvest our surpluses in more homes and service. We are hopeful that legislation to create the Housing Australia Future Fund will be passed shortly.



Peter McMillan, CEO of NT Shelter said: “Investment in social and affordable housing in the Northern Territory has lagged behind the rest of Australia over the last 20 years and we are now seeing the impacts of that in our extraordinarily high levels of homelessness and rental stress. The message is clear – we need more housing built and we also need funding for services to support people according to our level of need.”

To arrange interview, please call Karen Walsh 0413 432718 or Nick Lucchinelli 0422229032