

Submission on behalf of Hobartians Facing Homelessness- Rental Crisis Action Group- to Tasmanian Housing Strategy.

From Kate Kelly – Hobartians Facing Homelessness Founder, and Independent Housing and Homelessness Lived Experience Advocate.

I would request the State government review and take on board the recommendations previously provided by myself, to behalf of the Housing with Dignity Committee- to the House of Assembly Select committee on Housing Affordability on 14th August 2019, Including addressing systemic intersecting social economic and health issues that lead to homelessness.

Included in this document was a request that the state government considers reforms to the residential tenancy act and either adopt and integrate into the Tasmanian Act the specifics of the ACT legislation (2019) or adopt the ACT legislation and implement in full – whereby excessive rent increases can be disallowed and rent reductions can be ordered.

I would further request the State Government consider implementation of the following measures as part of the Comprehensive Housing Strategy going forward.

1. Urgently implement the measures recommended by the Hobart City Council to the State Government planning authority to ban future whole house short stay accommodation permits for the Hobart LGA. In addition to this, I would request that the state government sets a deadline for review of the Hobart City Council recommendation and makes this deadline public to reduce the growing number of short stay whole house permit applications that are being submitted in anticipation of this legislative change.
2. Reintroduce a rent to buy scheme and include in this scheme public housing stock that could be made available for purchase as rent to buy for existing public housing tenants -with ten years rental history in the premises and household size matching residents, and a portion of 2 years rent to be accounted for as partial deposit.
3. Address the issue of whole houses remaining empty for prolonged periods with an empty house tax.
4. Change landlord incentive scheme criteria that requires applicants to go off the public housing wait list. Applicants to the scheme must be able to retain their position on the public housing wait list.
5. Government incentives and cooperation with inner city first floor shop owners- to bring empty shop dwelling 1st floor residences up to building code for rental housing purposes.
6. Mandate 20% inclusionary zoning of affordable housing into all multiple occupancy builds.
7. Create risk sharing investment into private affordable housing builds, (such as housing cooperatives) to incentivize private investors to build and invest in social housing.

8. Build or re purpose existing housing stock or buildings that could be utilised as housing stock for single occupants particularly older women.
9. Shift language and action away from a focus on only building housing stock, to an approach exploring on existing housing supply opportunities in underutilised buildings, empty houses, whole houses are absorbed by short stay accommodation, end to create opportunities or investment mechanisms to put this stock back into the housing market.
10. Ensure that the change of corporate structure of the Housing Department does not result in an investor free for all of for-profit housing, at the expense of worthy and much needed social housing models, and that investment into future builds be cohort adaptive, varied, fit for purpose, and future proofed.
11. Inform communities better about the benefits of a varied social and public housing market, utilising a range of diverse models, to break down stigma about social housing in neighbourhoods, ie- NIMBYism. Lead this charge by investing in tested models that lift social mobility, such as cooperatives, socially mixed and autonomous housing, and co-housing.
12. Adopt the U.N sanctioned definition of Homelessness to better reflect actual numbers of people without housing, by including cohorts currently not reflected in data, ie- overcrowding, couch surfing.
13. Charge commercial rates for all existing short stay accommodation whole houses.
14. Change rental applications to the standardized form as suggested by Tenants Union Tas and include rights of renters to own a pet.
15. Maintain Stakeholder relationships and seek consultation with community led, lived experience advocacy groups in future planning and development of housing, ie- Hobartians Facing Homelessness.

Thank you for considering this submission,

Kate Kelly

Co- Ordinator and Founder-Hobartians Facing Homelessness