

Social housing

Social housing is housing subsidised by government that is reserved for low income households. This includes housing owned and managed by government through State Housing Authorities (public housing) and that which is owned and/or managed by non-profit organisations (community housing). It includes housing targeted for particular groups of people who are disadvantaged in access to housing in the mainstream private market including people with disabilities and people living with a mental illness. The highest subsidised housing (Band A) is rent capped as a proportion of household income (usually 25%).

Stats and issues:

- As of 30 June 2009, social housing in WA included 31,668 public housing dwellings, 2,275 state owned and managed Indigenous housing dwellings, 5,110 mainstream community housing dwellings, and 3,366 Indigenous community housing dwellings.ⁱ
- The number of social housing dwellings in WA has remained relatively stable since 1996. At the same time, the demand for social housing has increased dramatically. As of June 2010, there were 24,136 applicant households on the waiting list for public housing in WA.ⁱⁱ
- The Social Housing Taskforce estimated that if the increases in the waiting list continue at their current rate, there will be over 60,000 applicants on the waiting list by 2020.ⁱⁱⁱ
- In 2008-2009, community housing organisations in WA served 1,231 new households. This included 406 households who were homeless at the time of allocation.^{iv}
- The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and Federal Stimulus Packages in 2009 provided \$400 million for social housing in Australia. The reforms to social housing will focus on a number of key objectives, such as to:
 - Support a small number of community housing organisations to grow to a scale and competence where they can provide contestability within social housing, particularly against public housing provision;
 - Implement a national independent prudential supervision for social housing providers (both public and community housing) to include national regulation and registration;
 - Renegotiate how Commonwealth funds social housing to States, to provide an incentive for States to increase and improve their stock;
 - Deliver better stock to meet the current and future needs of tenants by better matching homes and households and linkages to required services and supports; and
 - Provide tenants with a choice of provider via a single access gateway.^v
- Under the National Partnership Agreement for Social Housing, WA built 170 units of social housing for 2008/09 and 2009/10.^{vi}

Resources and links:

- WA Department of Housing <http://www.dhw.wa.gov.au/>
- Community Housing Coalition of WA <http://www.communityhousing.com.au/>
- Community Housing Federation of Australia <http://www.chfa.com.au/>
- Commonwealth Rent Assistance
<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/payments/Pages/Rentassistance.aspx>
- Tenants Advice Service provides information and support for public and private tenants and community workers 9221 0088, <http://www.taswa.org/>

ⁱ AIHW 2010 *A profile of social housing in Australia*, Cat no. HOU 232, Canberra: AIHW.

ⁱⁱ Department of Housing, *Rental adjustments bring equity for public housing tenants*, Media Statement, 19 July 2010.

ⁱⁱⁱ Social Housing Taskforce, *More than a House and Four Walls*, Final Report – 30 June 2009.

^{iv} Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2010 *Community Housing 2008-09*. Housing assistance data development series. Cat. no. HOU 217. Canberra: AIHW.

^v Community Housing Federation of Victoria 2010, *What is community housing?*, [Accessed 31 October 2010], <http://esvc000034.wic056u.server-web.com/WhatisCommunityHousing.htm>.

^{vi} FAHCSIA 2010, *Social housing implementation plan WA*, [Accessed 31 October 2010], <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/progserv/affordability/affordablehousing/Pages/wa.aspx>