



Mr Stuart Clarke  
Director Social Housing Policy, Housing & Homelessness  
Policy & Service Design  
Department of Communities  
99 Plain Street  
EAST PERTH WA 6004

3 October 2018

Dear Stuart,

### **Support for the proposed income eligibility model for social housing**

Thank you for your briefing on the proposed changes to the income eligibility model for social housing tenants.

Western Australia's private rental market is failing to deliver affordable homes to meet current and projected need of low-income renters. Social housing is critical to deliver the housing required for the most vulnerable people in our society.

Shelter WA is supportive of the adjustment of the income limits for social housing proposed by the Department of Communities. Increasing the limits will counteract the lack of adjustments made to the income limits since 2006 and will ensure that social housing is accessible to people in need, and those that would have not been eligible under the current model. This is particularly important for single aged pensioner households who are at the most risk of becoming ineligible if current income limits are not raised.

Discussions of access to affordable housing and workforce participation are often treated as unrelated, separate issues. However, the relationship between access to affordable housing and employment is undeniable. The current income limits provide minimal work incentive to current households and applicants within the social housing system.

Shelter WA appreciates that the proposed income eligibility model will allow people to engage in part-time work or blocks of work without losing their housing. It has the potential to support them in improving their circumstances to take advantage of other housing options.

Shelter WA was concerned regarding the transition process or mechanisms that would be put in place to support people that might become ineligible through the proposed income eligibility model. Shelter WA was pleased to hear that there are plans in place to engage with those affected households and to identify their circumstances and to progress transition arrangements and supports with them.

In addition to this, Shelter WA believes that there should also be similar consultation processes and discussions with those who might be currently eligible and on the 'waiting list' for social housing, but



who might become ineligible under the new model, for instance due to the new introduced assessment of the whole household instead of just the applicant and the co-applicant and advise them about alternative options and support mechanisms.

Shelter WA would like to congratulate the Department of Communities on progressing this work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Mackenzie'.

**Michelle Mackenzie**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

