

WHAT WOULD AN EFFECTIVE HOUSING SYSTEM LOOK LIKE?

VISION:

Shelter WA believes that everyone has a right to secure, affordable, appropriate, and healthy housing that enables them to thrive. To achieve this, Shelter WA advocates for an effective housing system.

An effective Western Australian housing system is one:

- where homelessness is functionally non-existent, with episodes of homelessness being rare, brief and one-off.
- that responds to the diversity of people's requirements throughout their life course, through choices such as tenure, location, design, accessibility and typology.
- where people thrive in all forms of housing – from social housing through to the private market.
- where home ownership, or security of tenure, is attainable.
- where planning facilitates diverse, affordable and sustainable homes and communities across the state.
- where homes are environmentally sustainable, affordable to manage and provide for healthy living environments.
- where government policy, investment, incentives and action are optimised and informed by robust evidence.

WHAT WE KNOW

People in crisis require an immediate, appropriate, low barrier response and a pathway to a permanent housing solution. The principles of Housing First should be embedded in homelessness service delivery by ensuring housing is provided upfront without conditions, combined with additional support for those who need it. [1]

The principle of self-determination must underpin the delivery of all housing and homelessness services for Aboriginal people.

Housing is a social determinant of health and wellbeing. The provision of quality, secure, affordable housing must be considered a key component of health promotion and disease prevention. [2]

High quality housing options are required across the 'Housing Continuum'.

The shortage of social and affordable rental housing is a result of prolonged under-investment by government. The private market cannot be relied upon to deliver affordable, healthy, secure and accessible housing for all Australians.

An effective housing system would invest in, and manage, housing as essential infrastructure. [3]
This requires:

- Investment and supply of social and affordable housing commensurate with current and projected evidence-based need.
- Strengthening rental protections to ensure tenants are provided with affordable, healthy homes, with housing security.
- Overhauling tax settings to re-establish the inherent value of housing as an essential service and right, rather than a speculative asset.

To deliver an effective housing system, Australia urgently requires the implementation of the National Housing and Homelessness Plan, which must include measurable targets and an emphasis on meeting the housing needs of low- and moderate-income households.

[1] For more detail about the principles of Housing First see: <https://www.ruah.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Housing-First-Principles-web.pdf>

[2] World Health Organization. WHO housing and health guidelines. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018.

[3] Lawson et al. (2019) Social housing as infrastructure: rationale, prioritisation and investment pathway, AHURI. <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/sites/default/files/migration/documents/Social-housing-as-infrastructure-rationale-prioritisation-and-investment-pathway-Executive-Summary.pdf>