

Shelter WA

State Election Platform 2025

Everyone has a right to a place
to call home



About Shelter WA

Shelter WA is the peak body in Western Australia for the community housing and homelessness sectors. Established in 1980, we bring together a strong coalition of housing organisations and individuals committed to diverse and affordable housing choice for all. Shelter WA drives change by facilitating collaboration amongst those who have an impact on housing, while providing evidence-based policy, advice, engagement, representation, and strong advocacy for an effective housing system. Our vision is that all people in WA have a home that enables them to thrive.

Acknowledgement of Country

Shelter WA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country and their ongoing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all First Nations peoples and to the Elders past and present. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and our recognition and acceptance of your invitation to walk with you towards a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

Our Key Priorities for the 2025 State Election

- 1. Fix the shortage of social and affordable housing**
- 2. Relieve cost of living pressures for vulnerable households and renters**
- 3. End Homelessness, starting with rough sleeping**
- 4. Boost the capacity of the homelessness and community housing sectors to respond to the crisis**
- 5. Close the housing gap**
- 6. Make new homes accessible**

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To deliver this Election Platform, Shelter WA engaged in more than 15 instances of consultation, considering input from over 100 people including our members, people with lived experience and other stakeholders.

Consultations were conducted through surveys, webinars, individual phone calls, meetings, events and workshops and included perspectives from metro and regional representatives.

We have included a selection of what we have been hearing under each section of our platform. Please read the Election Platform in collaboration with our [Pre-Budget Submission 2024-25](#).

Foreword

A lot has changed since WA's last election in March 2021. Voters went to the polls as the most severe phase of the COVID pandemic was waning, feeling relieved for the return to normalcy, bolstered by government financial supports, and grateful for the leadership it took to steer us safely out of the crisis. The COVID crisis may be seen, in hindsight, as a time when many Australians felt a sense of solidarity, togetherness in a time of extraordinary challenge.

Since 2021 the gulf between those who have secure housing, and those who struggle to maintain or attain it has only grown wider. For those without secure, affordable housing, life since 2021, has become increasingly tenuous. The housing and cost of living crisis is the worst in living memory.

Shelter WA, our members, and our staff face tragic and desperate circumstances every day. Skyrocketing rents and housing costs have led to a surge in homelessness. Working families forced to sleep in their cars. A new generation born into couch surfing. Renters trapped in homes they can no longer afford but have no other choice.

These stories have no place in one of the most prosperous states on earth.

A recent Cost of Living Survey found the two most important issues facing Western Australians right now are cost of living and housing, with poverty, rents and climate change also rating in the top ten.^[1] (Box 1).

Western Australians are looking for relief from mounting cost of living pressure, and need to know there is a way out of from the overwhelming and undignified housing nightmare they are trapped in. We simply do not have enough safe, secure, and sustainable housing. Anywhere.

We have been encouraged by substantial and record-breaking new investment into social housing delivered in successive budgets since the last election. But it is nowhere near enough. We need a response that matches the scale of the problem.

Designing an election platform is an optimistic act, one that imagines a brighter future for all Western Australians and not just the lucky few. Elections, budgets, policies, and public resource allocations are all made through conscious choices by our elected officials – we believe the choice now is starkly illuminated – more housing, more support, more focus on reducing the housing divide, or a further widening of the gulf, cementing in for future generations poverty, ill-health, and poorer life choices.

Our election platform offers a plan for the future where everyone has a safe, secure, affordable place to call home, and ways to provide substantial and permanent cost of living relief to those who need it the most. While our housing crisis took decades to evolve, it could be resolved by the decisions taken this election.

The recommendations in Shelter WA's Election Platform campaign provide an opportunity for all parties to understand and commit to the steps needed to tackle this emergency head on.

Shelter WA and our members remain steadfast in our commitment to solve the housing crisis together. We know that a productive, healthy, safe, and prosperous society is underpinned by the provision of secure, appropriate housing. Our vision is that all people in WA have a home that enables them to thrive.

Ending homelessness is possible. Solving the housing crisis is possible. The choices to be made at the next election can be those that commit to solving these crises.

We urge all parties to commit to real actions and real choices to achieve this together.



Kieran Wong
Chair Shelter WA



Kath Snell
CEO Shelter WA

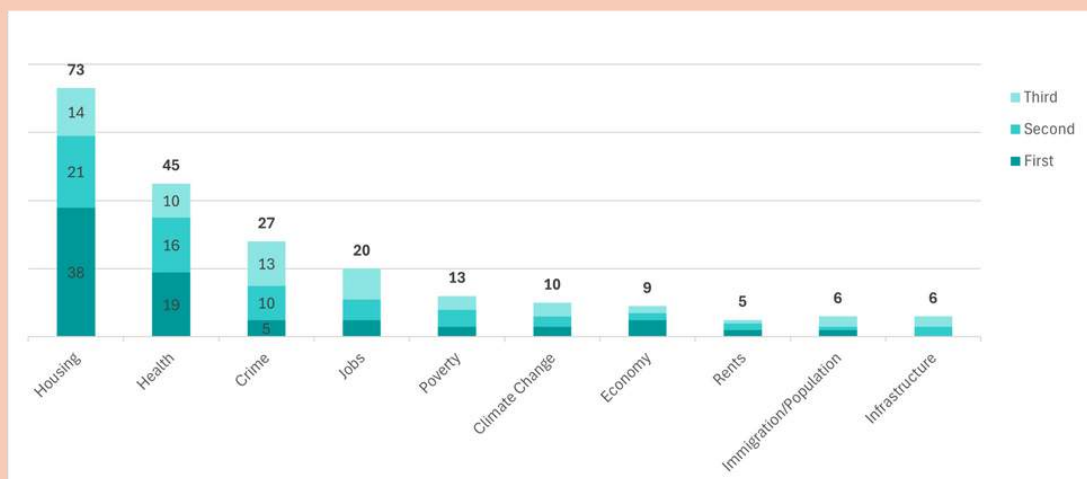
Box 1: Cost of Living and Housing Most Important Issues to WA Voters

In July 2024, the *Cost of Living Survey Report*, commissioned by Financial Counsellors' Association of Western Australia found the two most important issues facing Western Australian voters right now were cost of living and housing. The report also provided a snapshot of the pain people are feeling and the lack of hope they feel for the future.

- 82% said their housing costs had increased and almost half (44%) are very concerned about their ability to meet their housing costs
- Almost half (49%) said they are worse off than a year ago and respondents were generally not optimistic about the future, with 73% thinking they will be the same or worse off in the future
- Over half said they have had to cut back 'a lot' or a 'fair amount' on entertainment (52%) and food (51%) in the past year
- 37% said they would be unable to cover an unexpected \$500 bill without borrowing money, selling assets, or using a credit card
- All age groups across the survey said the State Government should be prioritising cost of living support for those on lower incomes.

Most important issues

What are the three most important issues facing Western Australians right now? (% coded)



Source: Talbot Mills Research
Base: All respondents (n=1074)

Where are we Since the Last Election?

The figures below show that across almost all indicators, things have worsened dramatically since the 2021 election.

We acknowledge though the significant increase – by 1000%! – in WA Government funding for social housing over this term.

Shelter WA’s **140** members manage **9,500** social and affordable homes

Homelessness

By Name List Data ^[2]

Total number of people experiencing homelessness across all five communities	March 2021 1188	June 2024 1635	38% 
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Number of people accessing homelessness services per day + unassisted requests for assistance ^[3]			
	2019-20	2022-23	
Number of clients being assisted every day by specialist homelessness services	4100	5100	24% 
Number of daily specialist homelessness service clients who report having slept rough in the last month	664	1100	66% 
Daily requests for assistance unable to be met by specialist homelessness services	57	75	32% 

Per capita homelessness spending ^[4]			
	2019-20	2022-23	
WA (\$ per person)	\$33.32	\$39.38	20% 
Australia (\$ per person)	\$44.58	\$53.15	19%

Housing

Social housing waitlist figures ^[5]			
	April 2021	July 2024	
Total applications	16660	20194	21% 

Social housing wait times ^[6]

	2020-21	2023-24	
Average waiting time	102 weeks	148 weeks	45% 
Median waiting time	58 weeks	124 weeks	114% 

Social housing stock numbers in WA ^[7]

	2021	2024	
Public housing	31919	36999 ^[8]	16% 
Community housing	7997	7978	0.2% 
First Nations community housing	2699	2692	0.3% 

WA Government social housing spend ^[9]

	2019-20	2022-23	
Net recurrent expenditure per person in the residential population	\$258.72	\$268.41	2.8% 
Capital expenditure	\$32.1m	\$353.5m	1001% 

Rental costs (per week) ^[10]

Median Perth Rental Prices

March 2021	Sept 2024	
House \$475	House \$780	64% 
Unit \$321	Unit \$613	91% 

Example of Regional Rental Prices ^[11]

	March 2021	August 2024	
South West	House \$390	House \$622	59% 
	Unit \$360	Unit \$500	39% 
Kimberley	House \$500	House \$975	95% 
	Unit \$412	Unit \$750	82% 

Residential Rental Vacancy Rates ^[12]

	March 2021	July 2024
Perth Rental Vacancy Rates	1%	0.8%
Northern WA	0.9%	0.8%
Goldfields Region WA	0.7%	0.6%
Central Coast WA	1%	0.5%
South West WA	0.8%	0.9%

Significant Achievements Delivered by Government

Shelter WA has been encouraged by this government's clear focus to deliver housing supply and its substantial investment into social housing announced in successive budgets. We acknowledge the number of significant initiatives and investments delivered, for example:

- New Government investment in housing and homelessness: \$3.2 billion ^[13]
- \$92 million boost in funding for homelessness services
- \$50m regional community housing grants.^[14] (See image 1 below)
- Expansion of the former Social Housing Investment fund to include affordable housing (now the Social and Affordable Housing Investment Fund) which will fund almost 5,000 social and affordable homes across WA^[15] and has already delivered 2,300 social homes, with another 1,000 under construction^[16]
- Rollout of the Djuripiny Mia Supportive Landlord program, which is delivering 100 homes in partnership with Housing Choices for rough sleepers across Perth, Peel and the South West;
- Expansion of the supportive landlord program with \$49 million committed to deliver 100 homes in regional locations, to be managed by community housing organisations
- Opening of critical accommodation facilities Boorloo Bidee Mia and Wandjoo Bidi, providing low barrier, support accommodation services
- Creation of the Rent Relief Scheme
- Passing of the first tranche of Residential Tenancies Act (1987) WA reforms
- Commencement of WA's first two Common Ground permanent supportive housing facilities
- Introduction of the Short Term Rental Accommodation registration system and incentive scheme, which to date has added an additional 276 properties to the long-term rental market ^[17]
- Introduction of the vacant property rental incentive scheme which to date has delivered an additional 36 properties to the long-term rental market^[18]



Minister Carey, Shelter WA Deputy Chair Michael Piu, Kalgoorlie MP Ali Kent
Source: [Kalgoorlie Miner](#)

Election Priority 1

Fix the Shortage of Social & Affordable Housing

What is needed

Recent initiatives by the WA Government, including increased social housing funding, relaxed planning requirements for ancillary dwellings, incentive schemes to transition short-term rental accommodation (STRA) and vacant properties to the long-term rental market, and projects utilising prefabricated construction methods,^[19] represent positive and welcome steps forward. However, these measures, while welcome, require increased scale and urgency. Additionally, to optimise existing assets, and accelerate supply, the following four measures are essential:

Set the bold targets we need:

The current wait list for social housing sits at 20 000 applications^[20] with average wait times of 148 weeks.^[21] Across Australia, social housing is not keeping pace with demand.^[22] In simple terms, progress cannot be achieved until there is a significant increase in the commitment to, and delivery of, social and affordable housing. Research on unmet housing need suggests that we need over 5000 additional social and affordable houses each year through to 2041,^[23] and a net addition of at least 1000 new social houses each year just to accommodate anticipated population growth and maintain stock.^[24] The current *WA Housing Strategy 2020-2030* is targeting only a 6% net increase in social homes this decade which is inadequate and should be revised to align with current and projected need.

We need not only to build *more*, but to boost the *proportion* of social and affordable housing as a percentage of total stock. Social housing is currently only 3.6% of all WA housing stock, compared with the national average of 4.3%.^[25] This is especially low compared to other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, with many sitting above 10%, or more for example 29% in the Netherlands and 16% in the UK.^[26]

Solve the rental crisis:

The WA rental market is in meltdown and there are not enough available or affordable rental homes. Since 2019, WA's rental vacancy rates have been far below what's considered a functioning market, currently sitting below 1%, and in many regions at essentially 0% (See Facts and Figures section above for vacancy rates in the regions). Over 85% of WA renters are in "extreme rental pain."^[27]

The Property Council of WA has found 18 000-20 000 additional rentals are needed to restore balance in the market.^[28] Without a mechanism to drive investment into new rental supply and reverse the catastrophic market failure, the situation will never improve.

As at August 2024 there are just 3700 rental properties listed across the whole of WA.^[29] The Cook Government's STRA incentive scheme has delivered 276 properties^[30] and its \$5000 vacant property rental incentive scheme has returned 36 homes into minimum 12-month rental leases, but much more is needed. By contrast, there are over 10 400 listings (for entire homes) available as short-term rental accommodation (STRA) such as Airbnb,^[31] and another 118 109 homes (11% of total housing stock) vacant in WA according to the last census.^[32] While there are many reasons homes may be vacant (such as family holiday homes or renovations), if just 10% of vacant properties were brought into the long term rental market that would be almost 12 000 additional homes.

Until the vacancy rate returns to a balanced level between 2.5% and 3.5%, the community needs stronger intervention.

Do more of what is working:

There are great examples on the ground in WA and interstate led by government, community and philanthropic enterprises, using already available land and assets to deliver more social and affordable housing, fast. We don't need more pilots, we need these initiatives delivered at scale. This includes Accordwest's Tiny Homes project,^[33] the My Home project in North Fremantle^[34] and the Kids Under Cover studio (see Box 10 case study below).

Deliver for the regions:

Wait times, rent prices, and even a lack of homes for local workers are severely impacting regional communities in ways unthinkable in a modern society. Each region deserves a place based and urgent plan unique to its own needs and community. To provide just one example, the Kimberley is experiencing a severe housing crisis, with median rental prices in Broome at \$1023 per week, and average social housing waitlist times at 226 weeks (over 4 years). As at September 2024, there were only 26 homes listed for rent, but 177 listings (for entire homes) available as STRA via Airbnb.^[35]

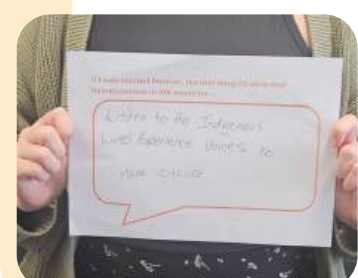
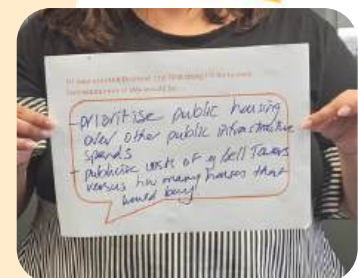
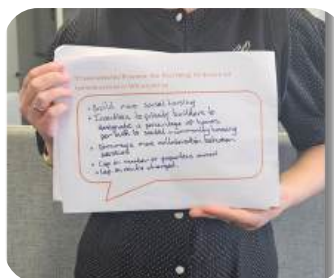
What we're hearing

"We should be limiting [short stay rental accommodation] so that we can use the stock for people and families who need long term homes"

"If I were elected premier, the first thing I would do to end homelessness in WA would be less red tape to implement alternative/innovative social housing; for example using buildings that have been empty for years; cabins, chalets and modular housing"

"We need to prioritise public housing over other infrastructure spends"

"Consider more tiny homes and Esperance LGA model of tiny homes on wheels"



Commitments sought

- 1. A quick win for rental supply.** Until the WA rental vacancy rate returns to a healthy rate of around 3.5%, every lever must be pulled to bring back homes into the rental market. We recommend even stronger regulation and intervention into the short-term rental accommodation (STRA) industry, including accelerating the planned introduction of the 90 day cap, and stronger incentives and measures to encourage bringing vacant properties into the rental market.^[36]
- 2. Establish a WA Affordable Rental Housing Scheme** to incentivise and deliver urgently needed new affordable rental supply, and expand the Cook Government's National Affordable Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) Acquisition fund.^[37] (Shelter WA [Pre-Budget Submission 2024-25](#) Priority 3)
- 3. Build on the success of the My Home project at scale,** with a commitment to offer long term leases on all appropriate government owned land and vacant properties for social and affordable housing projects, replicating the Homes Victoria Ground lease model (see Box 4 case study below).

This would include identifying and publishing a map of available sites – land and buildings^[38] – so that Community Housing Organisations and project groups can pitch and propose diverse, affordable developments to encourage innovative, competitive proposals for social and affordable housing.
- 4. Commit to bold evidence-based targets to solve the housing crisis:**
 - A minimum of 10% social and affordable housing in multi-residential private development in metropolitan areas
 - A minimum of 50% of housing on all state and local government land to be social and affordable housing
 - Build, convert or buy 5000 additional social and affordable homes per year
 - Increase the proportion of social and affordable housing in WA to 10% of total housing stock.
- 5. Enshrine these targets in the WA Housing Strategy 2020-2030,** and report against these targets annually. Setting these targets is essential to create an environment to encourage innovative solutions like rapid conversions of vacant buildings into homes; ancillary dwellings (granny flats), tiny homes, fast modular builds and even 3D printing.^[39]

Box 2: Case Study: Commercial to Residential Conversions in the NT

Under the Northern Territory's Key Worker Program, Venture Housing and Zest Developments partnered together on the Palmerston Studio Apartments Project, converting a floor of unused office space into 19 self-contained studios for rent to eligible key workers. The project enables completion within a short time frame at a lower cost offering, and provides opportunities for further innovation in housing supply with a replicable and scalable model.

Source: [Venture Housing](#)

6. Commit to a new place-based vision for the regions with funding for regional housing and homelessness plans, that cover:

- The unique housing, demographic, economic, cultural, and climate needs of our communities across the regions.
- Commitment to deliver additional essential worker and Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) in each region to reduce pressures on local rental markets.

7. Establish a **WA Housing Future Fund which sets aside a proportion of the state's surplus in perpetuity, to create a permanent, counter-cyclical, guaranteed investment into social and affordable housing.**

Box 3: Case Study: Inclusionary Zoning

The 2005 Housing Plan for South Australia mandated that 15% of new dwellings in all significant development projects be affordable, including at least 5% for high-needs groups. Over the 10 years to 2015, this delivered 5,485 affordable homes in SA.

The City of Sydney has also mandated an inclusionary zoning policy which has delivered around 900 social housing units (until 2021), with targets to deliver 80 new units each year.

Source: [AHURI](#)

Box 4: Case Study: Homes Victoria Ground Lease Model

Under a Ground Lease Model, Homes Victoria leases land to a consortium to build, operate and maintain housing on the site for 40 years. The land, and all homes, is then returned to public ownership which means there is no sale of public land.

As part of an integrated housing model, there is a mix of social, affordable, specialist disability and market rental homes across the sites to provide greater diversity in Victoria's rental stock.

The first Ground Lease Model projects were completed in early 2024 in Brighton (151 social + 140 market rental), Flemington (two developments: 50 social + 236 affordable and 240 social + 119 affordable) and Prahran (28 social and 206 market rental).

Source: [Homes Victoria](#)

Election Priority 2

Relieve Cost of Living Pressures for Vulnerable Households & Renters

What is needed

Protection from unfair rent increases.

Uncontrolled rent increases are the single greatest source of cost-of-living stress for the one third of Western Australians who rent.^[40] Rents in Perth have increased by 79% since pre-pandemic – roughly five times the rate of inflation, from \$400 a week in July 2019 to \$715 in July 2024.^[41] While the first tranche of rental reforms limited the frequency of rent increases to once a year, it did not limit the amount rents can be increased by. A form of rent stabilisation was proposed in 2019 as part of the consultation process on reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA). The need for a form of stabilisation to address runaway rents has never been more urgent.

There are a range of rent control mechanisms used all over the world that should be considered for use in WA. Options include capping rent increases to CPI plus 10% as they have done in the ACT, or to CPI as they have done in some European jurisdictions and the USA requiring the landlord to justify any rent increase above CPI, linking rent increases to average wage increases, or a combination of the above.

Energy efficiency retrofits in social and private rental housing.

Retrofits would provide around \$2800 annual cost of living relief per household. Currently much of WA's rental stock is ageing, inefficient and expensive for tenants to keep at safe, comfortable temperatures because private rents are much less likely than owner-occupied houses to have insulation, adequate window coverings, quality hot water systems or efficient appliances. Energy inefficiency is a key driver of power bill stress and energy poverty for renters. In a survey of almost 400 WA renters, the Make Renting Fair alliance found over half (54%) have difficulty keeping their home cool or warm. This figure is significantly higher for public housing (79%).^[42] Energy efficiency retrofits offer one of the lowest cost and highest impact opportunities to reduce cost of living pressure on WA renters. It's estimated a basic retrofit package including insulation, electric heat pumps, and rooftop solar would save households up to \$2800 per year.^[43] As the single largest landlord in WA, the WA Government can lead the way by undertaking a comprehensive statewide retrofit of all social housing, a step up of its *WA Social Housing Energy Performance Initiative*.^[44]

Introduce minimum rental standards.

Standards are needed to protect renters from paying for repairs and maintenance and establish the framework for a good, healthy standard for all rental homes. A Make Renting Fair survey of almost 400 WA renters found the current lack of standards and protections for renters meant 63% were paying to make repairs themselves, adding to the cost and stress of renting.^[45]

Reform income eligibility limits in social housing:

WA has the lowest social housing eligibility limits of all the Australian states and territories.^[46] Tenants whose income exceeds these limits will generally no longer meet the requirements to remain in their homes. Accordingly, income eligibility limits can disincentivise the return to or entry into the labour market for social housing tenants, who report feeling "trapped" in social housing without prospects to progress into employment

without losing their homes. The impact of these policies is to effectively entrench disadvantage, locking tenants into poverty.

This is particularly concerning in the current cost of living crisis. It also means that social housing tenants are limited in their ability to move along the housing continuum. Social housing policy needs to facilitate opportunity and provide clear housing pathways for tenants whose income increases during their tenancy.

What we're hearing

"If I were elected premier, I would support people to build different types of healthy, energy efficient homes... homes that support health and wellbeing"

"We need initiatives to relieve cost of living pressure and increase rent stability to prevent the increasing homelessness and huge demand for services we are seeing"

"There needs to be something put in place to make renting more fair"

Commitments sought

1. **Introduce a rent stabilisation mechanism** to protect renters from excessive rent increases and help to reduce inflation overall.
2. **Commit to a statewide social housing energy efficiency upgrade program** (Shelter WA Pre-Budget Submission Priority 4) to provide deep and permanent cost of living relief, as well as health and wellbeing benefits for WA's 43 700 lowest income households living in social housing.
3. **Introduce minimum standards for all rental homes.** Standards would cover the basics including dwelling structure, safety and security, and also phase in a Healthy Home standard to improve thermal comfort and energy efficiency – which would provide permanent cost of living relief through reduced utility bills. **Introduce a complimentary range of low or zero interest loans, rebates and grants to enable landlords to meet the new standards.**
4. **Reform income eligibility limits for social housing,** to remove tenant disincentives to employment, create pathway options out of social housing, and provide cost of living relief by enabling tenants to raise their income.
5. **Expand the rent relief program beyond June 2025** and broaden eligibility to include boarders and lodgers, as well as financially stressed households before they get into arrears.

At the start of the pandemic in **March 2020 62%** of all rentals listed on realestate.com.au were for **less than \$400 per week** in Perth. That share has **fallen to just 5.6% at May 2024.**

Source: [PropTrack Market Insight Report May 29 2024](#)

Box 5: Case Study: ACT's strong rental laws translate to highest supply and lowest rent increases in Australia

The ACT serves as a living example of the way rent caps, ending no grounds evictions, and improving minimum standards has translated to the healthiest vacancy rates and most stable rents in the country.

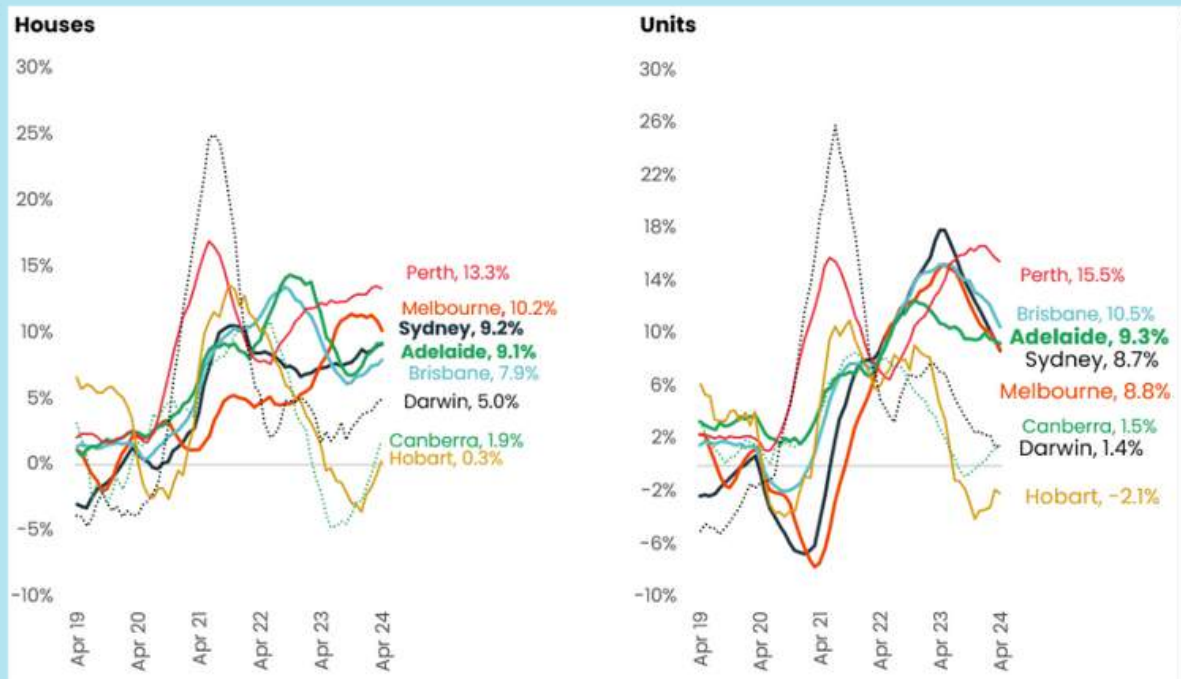
Canberra has the highest vacancy rates of all capital cities, at 2.2% in July 2024, compared with 0.8% in Perth.

Fig 1: Vacancy Rates July 2024

City	Jul 2023 Vacancies	Jul 2023 Vacancy Rate	Jun 2024 Vacancies	Jun 2024 Vacancy Rate	Jul 2024 Vacancies	Jul 2024 Vacancy Rate
Sydney	11,616	1.6%	12,143	1.7%	12,123	1.7%
Melbourne	6,834	1.3%	7,864	1.5%	7,979	1.5%
Brisbane	3,354	1.0%	3,962	1.1%	3,786	1.1%
Perth	1,062	0.5%	1,510	0.8%	1,462	0.8%
Adelaide	1,016	0.6%	1,180	0.7%	1,103	0.7%
Canberra	1,250	2.1%	1,265	2.1%	1,312	2.2%
Darwin	254	1.0%	223	0.9%	190	0.7%
Hobart	498	1.8%	425	1.5%	335	1.2%
National	38,864	1.3%	40,486	1.3%	39,701	1.3%

Canberra has also enjoyed some of the lowest rent increases since 2019. (Figure 2). The rolling annual change in house rents in Canberra to April 2024 was 1.9% for homes and 1.5% for units, compared to 13.3% in 15.5% respectively in Perth. (Figure 2: Annual change in rents)

Figure 2: Rolling annual change in rent values, houses and units



Source:
 Figure 1 - Property Update
 Figure 2 - CoreLogic

Election Priority 3:

End Homelessness, Starting with Rough Sleeping

What is needed

Supported accommodation, fast:

Ending rough sleeping is one of the key priorities of the 2020-25 action plan under *All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030*. The most recent census data, however, revealed just how far WA is from meeting this target. Between 2016 and 2021, the number of people sleeping rough in WA more than doubled^[47] and WA is now the "nation's capital for rough sleepers"^[48]. The current risk is that in the time it will take for permanent social housing stock to increase, the number of people falling into homelessness will continue to rise, countering any progress in real terms. The homelessness sector – in particular communities in regional WA and people with lived experience of homelessness – have been clear that further investment is needed into urgent accommodation options – including crisis or emergency accommodation – capable of relieving homelessness and bringing families into safety *now*.

A focus on prevention and early intervention:

The best way to end homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place. There is both a human and economic imperative to dedicate additional resourcing to all forms of prevention, including universal, targeted/ upstream, crisis, emergency and recovery/prevention of repeat homelessness^[49] (See Box 6). Targeted prevention must focus on at risk groups, including young people, people exiting institutions and victim-survivors of family and domestic violence.

Improve renter security of tenure and prevent no reason evictions:

Providing security of tenure to renters is a crucial preventative measure. Currently there are seven grounds for eviction in addition to no reason evictions. Tenants can be evicted without any reason or cause at any point during a periodic tenancy with just 60 days' notice, and at the end of any fixed-term tenancy with just 30 days' notice. The Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA) needs to reflect that a tenant's basic right to shelter and security takes precedence over a landlord's discretion to terminate a lease. Some have suggested that rental reforms like this could lead to landlords exiting the market, however research shows these concerns are unfounded.^[50]

Better data, so we can know the problem and respond accordingly:

The success of initiatives such as the Advance to Zero framework and the Rough Sleeper Coordination Groups shows that data-driven, person centred and place-based responses are key to ending homelessness, and rough sleeping in particular. Communities and services must be able to identify how many people need support and what support is needed; and respond with coordinated, timely and efficient action.

Box 6: Explaining Homelessness Prevention

Universal: preventing or minimising homelessness risk across the population at large (e.g. poverty reduction)

Targeted: Upstream prevention focused on high risk groups, such as vulnerable young people or women experiencing violence

Crisis: Preventing homelessness that is imminent e.g. preventing an eviction

Emergency: Immediate support for those experiencing homelessness e.g. emergency accommodation

Recovery: Prevention of repeat homelessness e.g. Housing First

Source: Homelessness Australia

What we're hearing

"We need early intervention strategies and rapid housing options for people experiencing homelessness – there is a new emerging cohort that is rapidly growing and is extremely concerning given the vulnerability and lack of options"

"We desperately need more crisis accommodation services"

"Assisting people to keep their homes is cheaper than them experiencing homelessness – both now and in indirect future impacts"

"Incentivise building of granny flats"

Commitments sought

- 1. Rapid reconversions for supported accommodation:** Identify and fund rapid re-conversion of vacant buildings – including former aged care facilities, hotels and motels – to boost the supply of accommodation with a target to provide supported accommodation for all people experiencing primary homelessness, as a matter of urgency (Shelter WA Pre-Budget Submission Priority 7).^[51]
- 2. Abolish no grounds evictions:** Amend the Residential Tenancies Act to abolish no reason evictions and require genuine reasonable grounds for evictions in line with the national cabinet 'Better Deal for Renters'.
- 3. Expand the Advance to Zero (AtoZ) Framework** (which includes the By Name List tool) into the wider metropolitan area and additional regional communities, aiming for a total of 12 communities by 2029 (Shelter WA Pre-Budget Submission Priority 6).^[52]
- 4. Install ancillary dwellings (granny flats)** for social housing tenants who can demonstrate a need and capacity to accommodate additional household members, relieving overcrowding and other pressures leading to homelessness (Shelter WA Pre-Budget Submission Priority 7).^[53]
- 5. Commit to a WA Housing First for Youth** model to reduce youth homelessness, drawing from the learnings of the *Housing First for Youth Project Report (2023)*.^[54]
- 6. Expand the Djuripiny Mia '(DM100)' supportive landlord initiative** in the Perth Metro, which to date has delivered 80 homes to 155 people sleeping rough.^[55]

Box 7 Case Study: Wandjoo Bidi (the Murray Hotel project)

In January 2023 the Department of Communities purchased the former Murray Hotel building and converted the structure into a low-barrier supported accommodation service for up to 35 people. The project – now operated in partnership between Vinnies WA, Department of Communities, Noongar Mia Mia and Ruah – was operational less than one year from date of purchase.

Further information [available here](#).

- 7. Establish three regional Youth Foyers** – suggested locations include Broome, Albany and Bunbury – to alleviate youth homelessness in the regions.
- 8. Fund and deliver additional Safe Night Spaces** in metropolitan and regional WA, in areas where there is demonstrated need.
- 9. Additional permanent supportive housing options (such as Common Ground):** Audit demand across all of WA and set targets to deliver supply.
- 10. Boost funding to tenant advocacy and support services and increase flexible brokerage:** to assist renters in social housing and in the private rental market, preventing homelessness by supporting tenants to stay in their homes.
- 11. Stable and long-term safe accommodation for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence:**
 - Immediate investment in existing family and domestic violence (FDV) Supported Transitional Housing and investment to coordinate a leading practice model for its delivery
 - Expand eligibility and support for crisis, transitional and social affordable housing for women on temporary visas
 - A 50% increase in funding for Safe at Home brokerage.

Box 8: Case Study: Djuripiny Mia Supportive Landlord Project

The WA Department of Communities partnered with Housing Choices to deliver 100 homes for vulnerable and complex individuals experiencing homelessness. This 'supportive landlord' project has so far sourced permanent homes – including through spot purchases – and provided wrap around support services to 155 people previously sleeping rough.

Further information [available here](#).

Box 9: Case Study: Centrecare's Entrypoint Outreach Program

This preventative early intervention pilot program was designed to divert families and individuals from homelessness into housing using brief interventions right at the beginning of engagement with homelessness system. An evaluation of the program found that 83% of those at immediate risk of homelessness avoided homelessness.^[56]

Further information [available here](#).

Box 10: Case Study: Kids Under Cover: [KUC] Support for Youth Facing Homelessness

This program – operational in Victoria and South Australia – provides fast-build, high-quality ancillary dwellings to families in need, providing stable accommodation for 1,000 young people at risk of homelessness every night. Kids Under Cover estimate that each dwelling costs approximately \$85,000 and takes between 4 and 10 months to construct.

Further information [available here](#).

Election Priority 4

Boost the Capacity of the Homelessness & Community Housing Sector to Respond to the Crisis

What is needed

Support the growth of community housing organisations (CHOs) as key delivery partners:

CHOs work across the housing continuum, can deliver higher tenant satisfaction^[57] and are able to provide better value for money by leveraging additional funds through their charitable status, tax exemptions and access to Commonwealth Rent Assistance. In WA, just four of the registered CHOs are Tier 1 providers, able to leverage finance and manage and develop larger scale developments. CHOs have collective ownership or management of approximately 17% of all social housing stock in WA, which has remained fairly static since 2015. While other states have seen management and/or ownership transfer of public housing to community housing organisations, this has not occurred at the same rate or pace in WA. With the creation of the Housing Australia Future Fund, it is more important than ever that CHOs are able to grow their capabilities, so that they will be well positioned to leverage Commonwealth funding and initiatives, and help build social and affordable stock in WA.

Box 11: Properties transferred from state and territory housing authorities to CHOs (2018-2023)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
2022-23	1056	-	32	-	-	54	-	60
2021-22	558	-	1	-	-	2027	-	12
2020-21	47	-	-	-	250	24		
2019-20	4549	-	-	-	-			
2018-19	8869	-	-	-	-			

Source: [ROGS 2024](#)

Strengthen the homelessness workforce, the frontline of the crisis:

Years of underfunding, increased demand on services and significant system reform (including a shift to holistic, long-term service provision through the application of no wrong door and housing first approaches) has resulted in a sector challenged by the attraction, retention and development of an effective workforce capable of meeting the increasingly complex needs of people experiencing homelessness. A recent survey found that 95% of homelessness workers across Australia noted a high or extremely high emotional impact from having to turn people away or provide less support than needed.^[58] By Name List figures also indicate that only 50% of people on the By Name List have access to case management support.^[59]

Operational and service funding to match capital funding: In recent years, both the State and Federal governments have established multiple streams of funding for capital “brick and mortar” projects to increase the supply of social and affordable housing and crisis accommodation.^[60] However, there is no equivalent operational or service provision funding to support the future tenants and residents of those capital projects. Without this complementary funding, there is a risk of additional pressure on an overstretched workforce and jeopardising positive outcomes for those tenants and residents. Project proponents seeking additional funding for operational and service funding must go through a lengthy budget bid process. Some projects will not even get to this stage – with proponents reluctant to apply for the ‘bricks and mortar’ funding if they have no assurance there is funding for the necessary operations and services. A successful example of a permanent flexible fund is Victoria’s Early Intervention Investment Framework.^[61]

What we’re hearing

“There is a tsunami of people needing help, and there is a lot of empathy in our sector. It causes emotional overload for staff if they can’t assist, especially when there are families involved... people’s situations are becoming incredibly complex”

“The Government needs to look at what they can do to capacity build with existing CHO’s, which will give Government more capacity to maintain and grow their stock”

Commitments sought

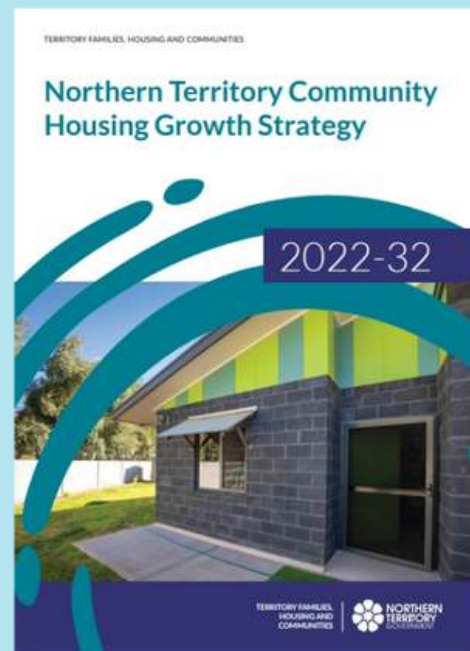
- 1. Establish a Community Housing Capacity Building Program** modelled on the Community Housing Futures Program in Queensland (Shelter WA Pre-Budget Submission 2024-25 Priority 1)
- 2. Establish a program for management transfers of 500 new social housing dwellings per year** to Tier 2 and 3 Community Housing Organisations (either new builds or spot purchases) (Shelter WA Pre-Budget Submission Priority 2).
- 3. Fund specialist workers in critical homelessness services:** funding to incorporate specialist mental health and alcohol and other drug workers into all homelessness outreach services, engagement hubs and housing first support services.
- 4. Develop and implement a Homelessness Sector Workforce Development Plan,** including lived experience workforce.
- 5.** Commit to implementing a **Community Housing Sector Growth Plan** before the end of 2025.
- 6. Fund the people as well as the ‘bricks and mortar’ by establishing a permanent flexible fund:** the fund would accompany Commonwealth and State capital funding and guarantees that operational costs and support services for all new social and affordable housing (including supported accommodation) are properly resourced.

7. **Commit** to ensuring that every individual on the By Name List has access to a caseworker.
8. **Establish an independent lived experience advisory body:** for people with lived experience of homelessness and housing insecurity capable of providing independent evidence and solutions; as well as **new funding to support peak bodies and other community services to engage with people with lived experience**, ensuring the expertise of people with lived experience is embedded into the design, delivery and improvement of homelessness services.
9. **Local government homelessness training:** Provide funding to develop and deliver homelessness training for local governments, including staff in frontline, planning, executive and elected member roles.

Box 12: Case Study: Northern Territory Community Housing Growth Strategy 2022-23

This strategy was developed in partnership with the community housing and homelessness sectors in the NT. It sets out a collective vision, underlying principles and a phased approach to achieving a set of agreed objectives: improving the long-term sustainability of the social and affordable housing system, increasing community housing-led asset renewal and new supply, and strengthening communities through improved asset and tenancy management, place making and renewal.

The report is [available here](#).



Election Priority 5

Close the Housing Gap

“Without safe, healthy housing, we will never close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians” Emma Garlett, The West Australian, 27 August 2024

What is needed

Embed a principle of self-determination.

New and sustained investment into Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and Aboriginal Community Housing Organisations (ACHOs) would embed a principle of self-determination. Research demonstrates the importance of First Nations-led service delivery for improving outcomes of First Nations people in the housing and homelessness system as they are better placed to provide culturally safe and flexible responses.^[62] It is estimated that only 6.2% of social housing properties (2711 properties) in WA are owned by ACHOs who report asset growth is not consistent with non-First Nations community housing providers.^[63] Similarly, to date, there are only two registered ACHOs in WA. New investment and renewed focus is needed to ensure the provision of housing and homelessness services in WA are led by and for First Nations people.

Culturally safe services to break down barriers and disadvantage:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are disproportionately impacted by homelessness and housing insecurity as shown in the infographic below. The WA Government's All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020–2030 has a significant and welcomed focus on reducing barriers faced by Aboriginal people in accessing housing, and empowering Aboriginal people and organisations to design and deliver services and accommodation that meet their needs. Achieving this commitment needs additional resources, investment and focus so that policies, practices and services across the entire housing continuum are culturally safe for Aboriginal people. Significant work has already been done by the ACCO sector to clarify what culturally safe systems and service provision looks like, including the Noongar Cultural Framework and Noongar Housing First Principles,^[64] and the Birdiya Maya research project.^[65]

The current gap in WA

- Compared to other Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience homelessness at 8.8 times the rate of non-Aboriginal people^[67]
- In WA, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent under 4% of the population, but:
 - 50% of specialist homelessness services (SHS) clients,^[68] and
 - 35% of people experiencing homelessness in WA^[69]
- Between 2016 and 2021, there was a 29% increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing homelessness in WA^[70]
- WA has the second highest rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness in Australia^[71]
- 50% of public housing tenancies terminated had at least one household member identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander^[72]
- Four Australian jurisdictions have an Aboriginal housing peak body^[73]

What we're hearing

"We can't get kids out of care without having a home to live in"

"We are really interested in setting up an Aboriginal housing peak, there needs to be a lot more reform"

"Where we are there is no short stay or other accommodation, so people just end up travelling to Perth for medical treatment... we need to keep families together in the Pilbara"

"We need to expand Aboriginal short stay to more regions"

Commitments Sought

1. Establish a **First Nations Housing Peak Body**
2. **Expedite** (see figure over page) **the construction and completion of proposed First Nations short-stay** accommodation facilities in Perth, Geraldton and East Kimberley; and **commit to an additional three short stay** facilities in regional and metropolitan areas where there is demonstrated need.^[66]
3. **Prioritise energy efficiency social housing retrofits** (identified in Priority 2 above) for First Nations housing and social housing in very hot climate zones. This can be achieved through a step up of the Cook Government's Public Housing Energy Upgrades (see Box 13).
4. **Boost investment into ACHOs** through transfers of income generating housing stock and capacity building programs (identified in Priority 4 above).
5. **Expand programs to facilitate and expedite ACHO registration;** enabling equitable access to state and federal funding streams.
Commit to reviewing the Community Housing Registration process in partnership with NATSIHA with a view to improving culturally led and culturally safe processes.

Box 13: Case Study: Public Housing Energy Upgrades in Western Australia

The 2024-25 State Budget set aside \$25.2 million to improve energy performance for housing in First Nations Communities in the Kimberley and regional towns. It was formally announced with the Commonwealth government in June 2024 with total funding of \$63.2m to help remote and regional public housing residents in hotter climates such as the Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne, Mid-West and Goldfield regions reduce their energy bills and keep homes cooler in summer. This will cover up to 4300 public housing homes and is stated to include energy upgrades including hot water systems and lighting. This represents around 12% of WA's social housing.

All jurisdictions have announced similar Commonwealth co-funded programs covering both public and community housing, including heat pump hot water systems, ceiling fans, reverse-cycle air conditioners, solar systems, insulation and draught proofing. The ACT is also removing gas and electrifying.

6. **Introduce a state-wide specialist First Nations Tenancy Support program** (in parallel to the Thrive program and other tenancy support programs) for tenants in both private and social housing, co-designed by First Nations communities and delivered by ACCOs.
7. **Work with First Nations service providers and First Nations people with lived experience of homelessness** to review current operational policies and practice – with an objective of reducing evictions and barriers to First Nations people’s access to social housing (for example debt policies and identification requirements).

Current and proposed Aboriginal short stay accommodation in WA



Source: [Department of Communities WA Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation](#)

Election Priority 6

Make New Homes Accessible

What is needed

Accessible housing:

every West Australian should have access to housing that supports them across their lifespan and adapts to changing needs.

Accessible homes benefit all Western Australians – not just those with a disability. It allows people to stay in their homes as they age, host visitors with mobility issues, ease of access for parents with prams, and provides appropriate housing for people with temporary injury / mobility issues. There is a 60% chance a new home will be occupied by someone with a disability within its lifetime. If visitors are also considered, the figure rises to 91%.^[74]

To date, all states and territories except Western Australia and New South Wales have signed up to the livable standards under the National Construction code^[75] This means there are far fewer homes available in WA for people with disability and older Australians. It also forces more people into group homes or aged care, putting additional pressure on the NDIS and increasing the costs for government. These design standards are not a lot to ask – they simply require developers to include things like a step free shower and level entry to the home.

Both the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse and Exploitation of People with Disability and the NDIS Independent Review recommended states and territories immediately adopt the mandatory standards for all new dwellings.



Source: Summer Foundation

What we're hearing

"If I were elected Premier, the first thing I would do is require private builders to build to the silver standard National Construction Code"

Commitments Sought

1. Within the first 100 days of Government, **commit to adopting in full the liveability and accessibility standards** mandated in the revised National Construction Code.

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