

A HOME FOR ALL

Housing as a basic necessity, like health and education

In a wealthy country like Australia, no one should be without a home. Unfortunately, years of Liberal and Labor governments have treated housing like a commodity and created a system that works best for their big corporate donors.

First home buyers compete with wealthy investors who benefit from tax breaks, and our laws are skewed to favour landlords over families and young people renting.

The Greens will ensure we have a housing system that puts people's needs before property developer greed.



THE GREENS WILL:

- Establish a **Federal Housing Trust** to fund the building of 500,000 public and community homes
- Implement a **national standard for renters' rights** and increase funding for tenancy advice services
- **Reform negative gearing** and the capital gains tax discount, and replace stamp duty with land tax
- **Fund crisis housing services**

A FEDERAL HOUSING TRUST TO BUILD 500,000 PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY HOMES

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute estimates there is a shortfall of over 500,000 affordable homes across the country.¹ Just increasing the supply of private dwellings will not solve our housing crisis because most of these dwellings will be unaffordable for many people and will not provide renters with a secure home.

Just like Medicare and our public school system, everyone should be able to apply for social housing if they need it. By building more and improved public and community homes, we can guarantee they are affordable, good quality, and provide people a home for life.

The Greens will establish a Federal Housing Trust that will be in a position to issue loans worth \$6.67 billion in 2019-20 rising to \$8.49 billion in 2028-2029 to states, territories and community housing providers to build 500,000 public and community homes across cities, towns, regions and remote areas over 15 years.

The loans will be complemented by capital grants of \$1.5 billion per year in the first three years, rising to \$2.5 billion per year from 2023, to State and Territory Governments. Research shows combining capital grants with a housing trust is one of the most cost effective ways for the Commonwealth to boost Australia's social housing stock.²

The Trust will ensure these homes are:

- Affordable: rents indexed and based on household income
- Accessible: mobility and accessibility needs will be met with best-practice design
- Sustainable: environmentally sustainable and energy efficient construction and design

A BETTER DEAL FOR RENTERS

The proportion of households who rent is the highest it has ever been, at 31% of all households.³ Yet we have no national standard for rental homes. Protections for people who rent are different in each state and territory.

1 Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Modelling housing need in Australia to 2025, Published 2017

2 [Social housing as infrastructure: an investment pathway](#) (2018), Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

3 ABS, 2024.0 - [Census of Population and Housing: Australia Revealed](#), 2016, 27/6/17

In many jurisdictions, people can be evicted from their homes with 'no-grounds', meaning the landlord does not have to give a reason and renters cannot challenge their eviction. Rent can also be increased by any amount, and as often as the landlord wants. Many renters live in unsafe and substandard homes because of weak regulation around security and habitability standards.

Owning your own home should not be the only way to guarantee a roof over your head for life. Renting can offer many benefits compared to a mortgage if regulations ensure that people who rent can have a secure and affordable home.

The Greens will establish a national standard for residential tenancy agreements in states and territories, which will provide:

- Long-term stability: prohibit 'no-grounds' evictions and give the option for standard indefinite leases with a three-month minimum notice period for termination by the landlord
- Affordability: regulate the amount and frequency of rent rises and prohibit 'rental auctions' that drive up rents
- Sustainability: enforce energy efficiency and environmental sustainability standards for rental homes
- Livability: ensure appropriate safety standards, allow tenants to make minor changes without permission from the landlord, and prohibit blanket 'no pets' clauses in leases and advertising. Ensure appropriate protections for victims of domestic violence in all states and territories

We will also boost funding for tenancy advocacy services by \$30 million, indexed to CPI for 10 years from 1 July 2019, to improve access to free and independent information, advice and advocacy for people who rent.

REFORM NEGATIVE GEARING AND THE CAPITAL GAINS TAX DISCOUNT, AND REPLACE STAMP DUTY WITH LAND TAX

Tax policies over decades have rigged the housing market in favour of wealthy property investors. By reforming our taxation system, we can build a fairer housing system for all.

The Capital Gains Tax (CGT) discount of 50% has encouraged wealthy investors to gamble on future price rises. It has done very little to encourage the building of

high-quality and affordable homes. It's also an inequitable tax break. Tax data shows that 80% of CGT discount benefits, amounting to about \$7.6 billion per year, go to the top 10% of income earners.⁴

Allowing property investors to negatively gear their investment has also encouraged speculation in housing. The Grattan Institute argues that the combination of negative gearing and the CGT discount "distorts investment decisions, makes housing markets more volatile and reduces home ownership".⁵ The Coalition government claims that "mum and dad" investors benefit from these tax breaks, but in reality the benefit for average workers is very small. The Australia Institute has found that the top 20% of income earners get almost 50% of negative gearing benefits.⁶

And stamp duty is an inefficient tax that raises the upfront cost of homes and penalises people for moving house. Transitioning to a progressive, broad-based land tax will encourage owners to make the best use of their land, and discourage owners from deliberately leaving land or properties vacant. Speculative vacancies are a big problem in Australia. Prosper Australia estimates that about 300,000 properties are wilfully vacant.⁷ Swapping stamp duty for land tax could boost the economy by 82c for every dollar, and has been described as the "best bang-for-your-buck tax swap".⁸ The Greens will offer finance to states and territories to help them transition away from stamp duty.

The Greens will:

- Wind back the CGT discount by 10% per year over five years
- Phase out negative gearing for investors with two or more investment properties over five years. Investors with a single property will be exempt
- Prohibit negative gearing on all future investment purchases
- Offer finance for states and territories to voluntarily transition from stamp duty to a broad-based land tax

4 AFR, [Eighty per cent of capital gains tax benefits go to top 10pc](#), 21/1/18

5 Grattan Institute, [Hot property: negative gearing and capital gains tax](#), 26/4/16

6 The Australia Institute, [Top Gears: How negative gearing and the capital gains tax discount benefit the top 10 per cent and drive up house prices](#), April 2015

7 Prosper Australia, [This is not vacant: Speculative vacancies](#), 8, the empty properties ignored by statistics, 2015

8 SMH, [How Turnbull can kill stamp duty and produce a budget to remember](#), 22/3/17

FUND CRISIS HOUSING SERVICES

In 2018, around 300,000 people sought assistance for homelessness. Lack of availability meant that 236 people seeking services had to be turned away every day in 2018.⁹

Under the Greens' plan, the need for crisis services will be reduced as greater investment in public and community housing will provide more people with a roof over their heads, and greater rights for renters will ensure more people have a secure, affordable home. That's the "Housing First" approach used in Finland where homelessness has fallen by 35% and the need for crisis services has been dramatically reduced since 2010.¹⁰

But crisis housing is an important safety net for those in need and these services must be available and accessible to everyone who needs them, when they need them. We will ensure nobody is without a bed and a roof over their head, even for one night. The Greens will:

- Set aside \$500 million per year to fund transitional housing and crisis services
- Guarantee this funding for ten years to give service providers certainty

9 AIHW, [Homelessness services: overview](#), 2018

10 [Guardian, inland has found the answer to homelessness. It couldn't be simpler](#), 12/4/18