

A UNIVERSAL HOUSING SYSTEM

BUILD 300,000 SOCIAL HOMES AND ALLOW EVERYONE TO APPLY

We believe housing should be a universal right. Just like Medicare and our public school system, everyone should be able to apply for social housing if they need it. Social housing should be a desirable and realistic alternative to taking out a mortgage or renting for life in the private market. We will grow the housing stock to make homes available to the most needy and to those on higher incomes who choose to be part of our universal housing scheme.

OUR PLAN

The Greens will aim to create 300,000 social homes over ten years, which will more than meet the gap in low-cost rental housing identified by Shelter NSW.¹

We will legislate to ensure public land is retained in public hands. 100% of housing on public land will be social housing. We will set inclusionary zoning targets so that at least 30% of housing on private land will be social housing.

A SYSTEM IN CRISIS

The private sector is currently building about 200,000 homes per year nationwide.² For

NSW that could mean an additional one million dwellings over the next 10 to 15 years. Under current policy settings, almost all of those dwellings will be unaffordable and of poor quality.

The Greens' plan ensures that at least a portion of the homes that are going to be built in the private market are guaranteed to be affordable, high quality, and energy efficient.

There are over 60,000 applicants waiting for social housing in NSW – in reality that is likely to be over 100,000 people on the NSW public housing waiting list, which extends for 10+ years, who have been approved as eligible for social housing.³ On census night in 2016, 37,715 people in NSW were homeless.

UNIVERSAL SOCIAL HOUSING

As starting point we need to address the backlog of social housing applications by increasing housing stock. NSW currently has only about 4% of homes in the social sector. Compare that to progressive countries like Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, which have 20-30% of housing stock in public and community hands.

Australia has a proud history of building public housing infrastructure. During the postwar boom and until the late 70s, Australian governments invested heavily in social housing, whereas since then there's been a significant decline in line with the predominant neo liberal market based approach,⁴ as shown in the graph on page 4.

There is the possibility of a sustained reduction in private investment and construction following the recent bubble. The response from conservatives has been typical – they want to slash regulation, let the big banks off the leash, and offer more incentives to private investors and developers to re-inflate the bubble.

A NEW WAY

The Greens are offering a different response. The boom in private sector investment has only resulted in poor quality homes that are unaffordable for both renters and buyers. We should ramp up public sector investment to compensate for the decline in private sector investment.

Our plan for 300,000 new social homes could act as a stabiliser for the construction sector and the broader NSW economy. Let's imagine a scenario where our reforms to unfair tax

breaks are implemented, which makes housing less profitable for private sector investment. Then a prominent property developer threatens to sack 1,000 workers unless the changes are reversed.

Rather than backslide by reintroducing tax breaks and favourable rezonings, we should stand firm. We will re-employ every single one of those workers in well-paid, unionised, public sector jobs. Instead of building concrete shoebox apartments, they'll be building high-quality zero carbon social homes.

Our visionary plan will put an end to the increasing pressures faced by the hundreds of thousands of people living in NSW who go without food each week to try and meet the exorbitant cost of their rent in the private market.

WHAT WILL IT MEAN FOR YOU?

- A safe, secure, habitable and affordable home to live in – no matter what your financial situation.
- Universal eligibility: everyone is able to apply, with allocation based on need.
- Stability: if you want it, it's your home for life. If you get sick or lose your job and can't pay for a while, you will not be evicted. You'll be given time to get back on your feet.
- Affordability: your rent will always be under 30% of your income and scaled for lower income households.
- Accessibility: mobility and accessibility needs will be met with best-practice design.
- Sustainability: all homes will be zero-emissions and consume half the energy of typical dwellings today.

ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

This plan seeks to solve the housing crisis and end homelessness in NSW – but it will take a phased approach so that we can address the existing and most pressing problems in social housing first.

THE GREENS PLAN WILL:

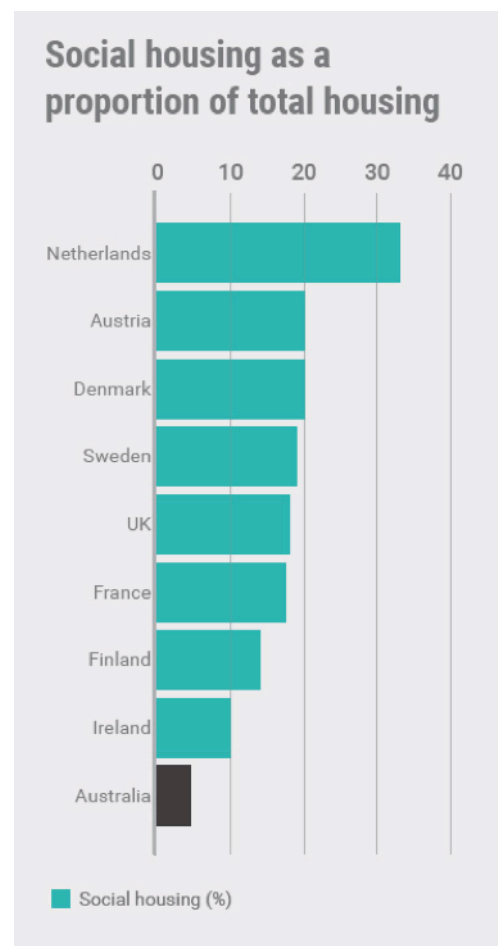
- Commit to no exits into homelessness from social housing.
- Address the current \$300m maintenance backlog.⁵
- Put a ban on the sell-off or forced relocation of social housing or public land which could be used for social housing.
- Resolve the large backlog of priority transfers already approved (at risk, medical, etc.) and adapt and build specialised accessible units and homes.
- Remove all income ceilings in social housing so that people can stay in their home and retain their tenancy if they start earning more money.
- Abolish the punitive ‘three strikes’ and ‘local allocation strategy’ policies and instead provide tenants with access to mental health, drug and alcohol counselling, and community outreach support.
- End any income management or compulsory rent deduction scheme.
- Provide long term security so that residents can create a home and are not subject to unjust evictions.
- Renovate existing dwellings to meet the highest amenity, accessibility, security and environmental sustainability standards.
- Create functional community spaces that can accommodate a range of services and community activity, and fund tenant-led

advocacy and outreach programs to enable active participation in decision-making.

- Prevent for-profit corporations from being involved in the provision of social housing.

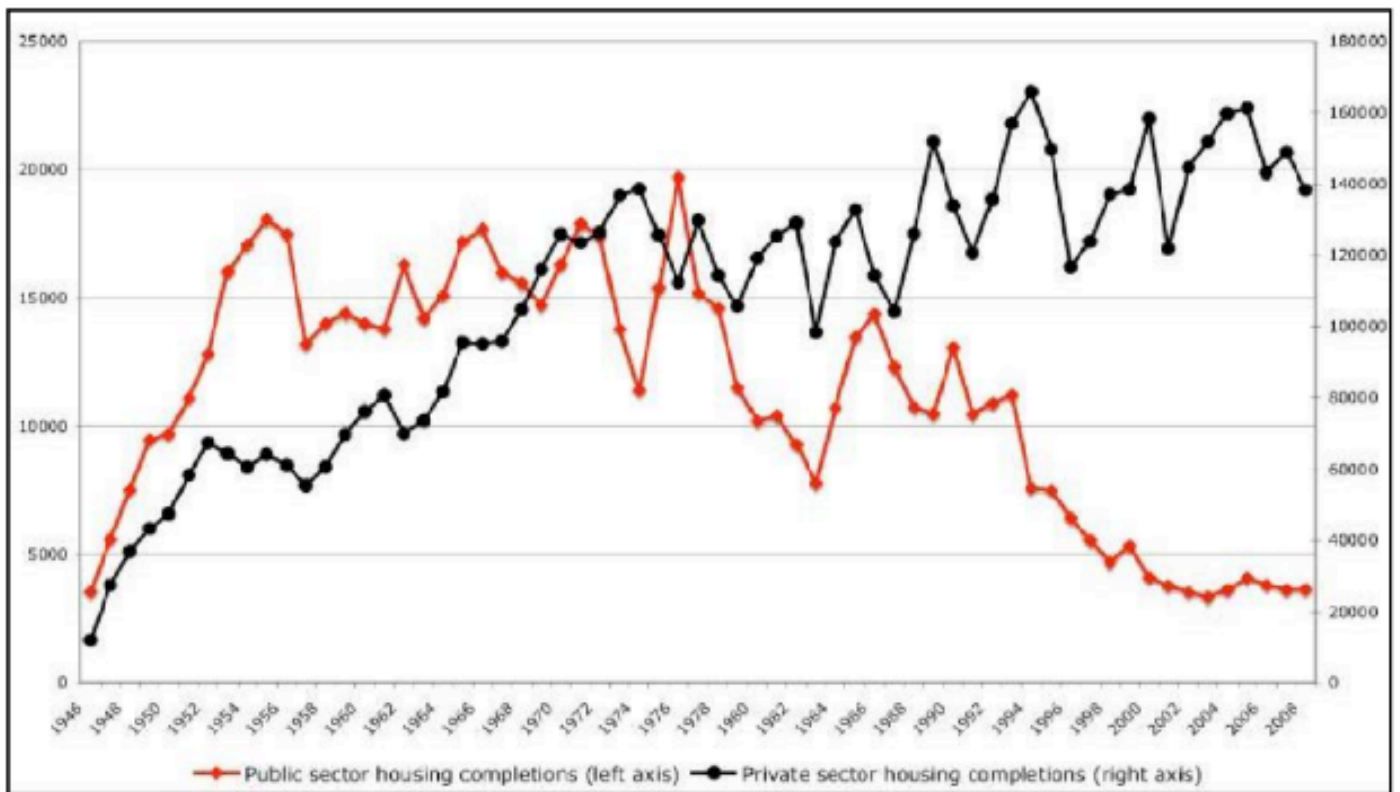
INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

Once we have addressed the crisis in the current system, The Greens want to progress serious investment in building high-quality social housing and moving to a model that is open to everyone. This works in other countries – The Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark to name a few. These countries balance the private market with a large social housing sector⁶:



People in these countries are guaranteed high-quality housing for life, without having to take out a mortgage or deal with private landlords.

Figure 1.1- Australian annual public and private sector dwelling completions (1946-2008)⁶



¹ <https://shelternsw.org.au/sites/shelternsw.org.au/files/public/documents/ShelterNSW-2019%20Election-Platform.pdf>

² <https://www.corelogic.com.au/news/commencements-and-completions-fall-while-volume-housing-under-construction-remains-close>

³ Almost 50,000 applications (many of whom are couples or families) and over 4,500 applications for priority housing - <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/expected-waiting-times>

⁴ [http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/commit.nsf/\(Report+Lookup+by+Com+ID\)/F4088CA4544382084825793D00061BD2/\\$file/30105662.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/commit.nsf/(Report+Lookup+by+Com+ID)/F4088CA4544382084825793D00061BD2/$file/30105662.pdf)

⁵ <https://www.ncoss.org.au/sites/default/files/public/policy/Social%20and%20Affordable%20Housing%20Innovations%20People%20First.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/policy/ahuri-briefs/what-is-the-right-level-of-social-housing>