

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

The ACT Greens have an ambitious and achievable vision for Canberra's future where homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring.

But at the moment there are not enough public homes, meaning frontline services are stuck with the impossible task of supporting people to move out of emergency accommodation while there is a massive shortfall of affordable places to live.

The ACT Greens will get to work on fixing the housing crisis, combining our transformative plan to build 10,000 affordable public homes with an initiative to fund gaps in frontline services through a Homelessness Services Project Fund.

THE ACT GREENS WILL:

- ▲ Establish housing as a human right by law, meaning government has a legislated responsibility to end homelessness
- ▲ Co-design a youth homelessness strategy with young people to ensure a targeted approach to breaking the cycle of homelessness early
- ▲ Explore establishing a public retirement village to address the increasing unaffordability of retirement options for older Canberrans
- ▲ Create a 'Homelessness Services Project Fund' to identify new models of homelessness support that can more quickly address immediate needs
- ▲ Support the work of Aboriginal Community Controlled Housing Organisations to meet the housing expectations of First Nations people

ENSHRINING HOUSING RIGHTS

The ACT is proud to be a human rights jurisdiction. Since the introduction of the ACT Human Rights Act in 2004, we have been progressively identifying areas where we need to strengthen human rights. In this term of Government, the ACT Greens are proud to have spearheaded the work to introduce a human right for a healthy environment. It is time to recognise that we all have a right to housing as the foundation to building a good life.

The ACT Greens will legislate Housing as a Human Right in the ACT Human Rights Act 2004 as a mechanism to ensure that Government and other stakeholders use every tool to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe, accessible and affordable housing.

PROVIDING HOMES AND SUPPORT TO PEOPLE WHO NEED THEM MOST

The private market has failed to deliver affordable and secure housing for a growing section of the community, even amid current government incentives. We need to ensure that groups that struggle to survive in the private rental market are supported to access safe homes that meet their needs. We know that groups including First Nations communities, older people, young people and students

are let down by the housing market, and when things are challenging, need support and assistance to enable them to address intersectoral issues that create barriers to accessing a safe and stable home.

FIRST NATIONS

Our First Nations communities continue to face the devastating impacts of dispossession, including much higher rates of homelessness and housing stress. We are excited to see the emergence of new Aboriginal Community Controlled Housing Organisations, and proud to have secured funding for the provision of specialised housing support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through this term of government.

We will continue to support these organisations to grow and thrive, and fulfill their vital role to empower First Nations communities to provide housing and support services to their community. We will continue to provide support for innovative housing first models that create supportive communities.

YOUNG PEOPLE

The ACT Greens recognise both the high number of young people facing homelessness and the opportunity to break the cycle of homelessness and marginalisation through supporting young people early on. A lack of accessible information on navigating processes to access services and the need for ongoing, trusted support for young people experiencing homelessness are among the barriers to exiting the cycle of youth homelessness. We will facilitate and resource a

community-led, co-designed Youth Homelessness Strategy for the ACT.

The ACT Greens also recognise that for a city which welcomes students from interstate and overseas to its institutions, affordable housing options for students are inadequate. Housing stress can greatly impact students' capacity to participate fully in their studies, in turn affecting educational outcomes as well. The ACT Greens will support models that provide affordable housing alternatives for students, such as the Canberra Student Housing Co-operative. We will also continue the work on bold reforms to make Canberra better for renters and explore options to improve the supply of affordable student housing in the ACT.

OLDER PEOPLE

One of the groups in our community most at risk of homelessness is older women. With lower levels of lifetime income, time out of the workplace due to caring responsibilities and lower superannuation, if something like a relationship breakdown or job loss happens, they find themselves in a precarious situation. For people who have been unable to buy and pay off their family home by retirement also have fewer options to secure safe, affordable and stable housing as they age.

The Greens will continue to support innovative models such as Build-to-Rent-to-Buy schemes that create opportunities for older women to live in safe and secure homes.

We will investigate models for older people to access supportive housing models, including public and affordable retirement living options. The ACT Greens will explore establishing a government-owned and operated public

retirement village, to allow people to remain in their communities over longer periods of time.

INVESTMENT:

- \$100,000 for the development of a Youth Homelessness Strategy for the ACT.
- Public retirement village can be delivered as part of the 10,000 public homes commitment already made by the ACT Greens.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE BASED MODELS OF SUPPORT

HOUSING FIRST MODELS OF SUPPORT

The Greens will continue to invest and expand services that we know work to end rough sleeping here in the ACT. We will enhance Housing First models that include wraparound support needed for people with complex needs to maintain their tenancy. We will provide funds and infrastructure such as head-leased government-owned properties to ensure that everyone who needs a home has access to one, along with the support they need to sustain their tenancy.

PLACE-BASED APPROACHES FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

The ACT Greens know that a holistic, community-focused approach goes a long way to challenging entrenched disadvantage in specific communities.

We will encourage better coordination between relevant government agencies to support wholistic approaches that bring together multiple areas of focus, with housing being one of them. We recognise how a lack of access to essential services such as healthcare and transport can exacerbate difficulties faced by communities. We will support and resource this work for communities such as Oaks Estate and Ainslie Village.

CONTINUING OUR INVESTMENT IN THE SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SECTOR

In this term of government, the ACT Greens have worked in partnership with the specialist homelessness sector to co-design and commission homelessness services that not only provide a roof over people's heads, but also the support people need to address the issues that have led to homelessness.

It is essential that at the front and centre of this work is the needs and experience of the people who access homelessness services. We will work with the sector on a continuous improvement journey: implementing common assessment tools, improving the centralised intake service and continue to ensure trauma-informed practice.

We will continue to support the specialist homelessness sector to ensure that it has the capacity to respond to current and emerging needs. We will provide more support for people with complex needs. We know a Housing First approach is only successful when we have wraparound supports, and as we reshape access to public housing, the way we deliver services to those experiencing homelessness will change.

We will support innovation and evidence-based practice in the sector. We will allocate \$8 million in government funding to the specialist homelessness sector to support new service models and programs that respond to emerging and changing needs. We will ensure that proven service models and approaches such as Common Ground have sustainable and secure funding.

INVESTMENT:

- \$8 million over four years of additional government funding.

SUPPORTING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY HOUSING SECTOR

While our core focus is utilising government investment to deliver more public homes, we still recognise that the community housing sector can play a key role in providing homes that are more affordable. The ACT Greens have previously won land tax exemptions for socially minded private landlords who

are interested in supporting people on lower incomes to access more affordable housing in the private rental market. The Build-to-Rent program and community housing fund have provided the opportunity for community housing sector to come to government and propose innovative social and affordable housing models.

The ACT Greens will continue to support the Affordable Housing Project Fund as a mechanism to identify innovative models for community and affordable housing, and advocate for ACT providers to get their fair share of Federal programs such as the Housing Australia Future Fund and National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation.