

Thousands of affordable homes in limbo amid push for federal help



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Greater Brisbane would see 790 affordable homes begin construction within 18 months if federal support was given for the SHARP program.

Thousands of new affordable homes for struggling families could be built within months if a key federal intervention is given the green light on October 6.

A new housing survey found that 1176 new affordable homes were ready to be built in the Sunshine State alone in the next year and a half – and over 12,500 all up nationally in the next five years – if the federal government delivers a crucial stimulus package in the October 6 national budget.

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The Community Housing Industry Association has called for federal intervention on budget day October 6 to allow thousands of homes to be built for struggling renters.

The call for greater investment into affordable housing comes as Everybody's Home campaign spokeswoman Kate Colvin warned of major housing stress set to hit families struggling in the midst of COVID-19 fallout.

"Socially we are on the precipice of unprecedented levels of housing stress and homelessness in Australia – and renters are at the very frontline of that crisis in Queensland. Rental affordability has already halved for families surviving on a minimum wage or who have lost jobs because of COVID-19."

"When mortgage holidays and rental moratoriums are lifted and government welfare payments 'tapered', the true face of rental stress and homelessness will be revealed. A housing stimulus package will help keep more Australians housed and construction workers employed."

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Affordable housing covers rentals that are offered at below market rent, catering for families and individuals that need subsidised housing. Some states have previously offered stimulus packages for affordable housing stock to be built up by community and other bodies, but the Community Housing Industry Association wants a national building program to be rolled out urgently.

CHIA chief executive Wendy Hayhurst said Australia could start beating the recession immediately by investing in social housing construction if a Federal stimulus package was included in the October 6 budget.

"If governments invested in the full four-year Social Housing Acceleration and Renovation Program to build 30,000 social housing homes, up to 18,000 full-time equivalent jobs would be supported each year nationally – 6,000 of the homes in Queensland.

"Our survey shows that many of these homes are ready to be built right now and would create the immediate hit the economy is crying out for."

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A CHIA survey found 1176 social and affordable homes could be built in QLD alone in the next year and a half if federal support came through.

Brisbane Housing Company chief executive Rebecca Oelkers has 32 new homes underway now at a Cornwall Street development in the Queensland capital.

"BHC is always working with state and local government, as well as private and not for profit sector partners, to identify opportunities for potential new developments. Federal stimulus funding would allow us to bring forward these projects and give local tradies some much-needed job certainty, and households in need some greater hope about their housing futures."

"We have the capacity to really get things moving. We are excited about what we could do as part of a national construction and development program."

Modelling by SGS Economics estimated that a full four-year SHARP program building 30,000 social housing homes would create up to 18,000 full-time equivalent jobs a year.

Nationally, federal support would mean nearly 3,500 new homes starting March-September 2021, over 1,500 new homes starting September 2021-March 2022 and 1,500 new homes starting from March 2022.

Pre-budget submissions closed August 24 with the federal budget set to be introduced to parliament on October 6.

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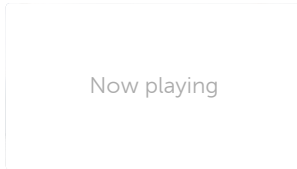
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