



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **ECONOMIC BLUEPRINT PROVIDES TIMELY WAKE UP CALL ON HOUSING**

The final report of the Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission provides a clarion call for change, with a diverse housing supply central to supporting future population growth, according to housing and homelessness peak body NT Shelter.

In its landmark report for winning investment and creating jobs, the Commission highlights the need to ensure that the availability of quality affordable urban housing keeps pace with the needs of a growing economy.

“The Commission has driven a firm stake in the ground in this report, emphasising access to safe and affordable housing as a “crucial factor in achieving economic goals”. This must drive real and concerted action to investigate the volume and mix of housing infrastructure that’s needed, and act decisively”, said Executive Officer Peter McMillan.

Mr McMillan said that the Territory already had a lot of catching up to do before it could be confident of housing a growing population.

According to the former Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development’s 2019-20 Annual Report, the number of applications for public housing increased by 22% over the past two years. Overall public housing supply has failed to keep pace with demand, with the total number of dwellings falling by 47 since June 2017.

The Northern Territory Government has outlined in its Housing Strategy 2020-25 an estimated shortfall between 8,000 and 12,000 houses over the next five years.

“Activity is expected to ramp up over the coming years with new housing builds in remote communities to address severe overcrowding but there isn’t a plan to address unmet demand for housing in our cities and regional centres, especially at the affordable end of the market. We can’t afford to see housing emerge as a laggard for economic growth and an impediment to our regions attracting key workers and new industries”, he said.

“We need to roll up the sleeves and get started on a housing masterplan for our regions immediately. This is an opportunity for a true partnership between government, industry and non-government leaders to assess and address the challenge from here, identifying how we will attract the cash that’s required to get houses built where they’re needed.”



Mr McMillan said he was very encouraged by the Commission's remarks regarding the role that non-government housing providers could play in boosting housing supply.

"Community housing providers play an increasingly important role across Australia in supplying social and affordable housing as an alternative to public housing. The Commission's recommendation to establish a sustainable community housing industry in the Territory, and its recognition of its role in the economic development of the Territory, is right on the money and is strongly supported.", Mr McMillan said.

The Commission's report calls for the development of a rolling 'investor prospectus' for community housing providers, identifying public housing stock for transfer and land offers. It also outlines the need for active consideration of heat mitigation and energy efficient design to improve comfort and amenity in residential housing design.

"We are pleased with the emphasis that the Commission has placed on housing in its final report. We are also heartened by the fact that the Government has accepted the report's recommendations in full. We are ready to talk turkey on how we can shift gears on housing and get the job done in a way that meets the housing needs of a growing population and also ensures that those Territorians currently without access to social and affordable housing aren't left behind", Mr McMillan said.

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