



MEDIA RELEASE

16 December 2022

JOHN STOKES SQUARE SETS NEW DIRECTION FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

The commissioning of the first two towers at John Stokes Square and supply of 60 units for public housing waitlist tenants provides a new benchmark for how social housing and surrounding amenities are designed, built and managed, says affordable housing peak body NT Shelter.

“The redevelopment of the John Stokes Square precinct, with the oversight of a registered Community Housing Provider, now provides an important opportunity to rebuild community confidence in the way that social housing is delivered, managed and maintained”, said Chief Executive Officer Peter McMillan.

Mr McMillan said that the John Stokes Square model was encouraging because it represented a departure from the traditional way in which public housing is managed by State and Territory governments.

“Public housing provides housing to Territorians who would otherwise be homeless, but over recent decades it has suffered from poor design and construction, a lack of maintenance and upgrades, and a lack of support for tenants”, Mr McMillan said.

The Northern Territory Government’s Community Housing Growth Strategy will see the transfer of up to 40% of its urban public housing assets to registered community housing providers (CHPs) over the next 5 years.

“Registered CHPs are a vital part of building livable communities and providing services to tenants in a more effective manner. They are for-purpose organisations whose business is in ensuring that more social and affordable housing is built for low income tenants and key workers. They partner with support services to make sure that tenants receive the assistance they need”, Mr McMillan added.

Mr McMillan said that well designed, good quality, energy efficient buildings were important for all tenants, regardless of income, and provided community precincts and amenities that benefited the entire community.

“We have already seen in other states how new social housing precincts, managed by professional CHPs, can enhance local communities. This is why it’s important that we get this right in Nightcliff and show that social housing can not only provide much needed housing for those on public housing waitlists but can blend in well and enhance our neighbourhoods”, Mr McMillan said.

Mr McMillan said a fairer funding model for the Northern Territory on housing and homelessness from 2024 would enable more communities to benefit from community renewal and investment in social and affordable housing.



“The Northern Territory only receives a paltry \$20 million per year out of \$1.6 billion under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) because funding is based on population share rather than actual need. It is incumbent on all State and Territory Governments to ensure that funding is allocated equitably, based on need, from the commencement of the new agreement in 2024”, said Mr McMillan.

Support for needs-based funding to State and Territory governments for housing and homelessness has received a major boost from recent inquiries, including the Productivity Commission’s *Housing and Homelessness Agreement Review* and from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs *Inquiry into Homelessness in Australia*.

“A fairer funding deal for the Northern Territory would enable us to undertake more John Stokes Square projects. It would add to our total social, affordable and key worker housing stock, get more Territorians off growing public housing waitlists, and allow us to provide more families with housing that is well designed and properly supported by tenancy support services. This would make an enormous difference by providing greater funding for housing and homelessness services to support tenants to manage and maintain their tenancies, get help with managing problem visitors, and ultimately reduce anti-social behaviour and improve liveability in our neighbourhoods”, said Mr McMillan.

-ENDS-

Media contact: Peter McMillan (0447) 234 217