



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **JOHN STOKES PRECINCT ANNOUNCEMENT WELCOME**

Today's announcement by the Northern Territory Government, calling for expressions of interest from registered Community Housing Providers (CHPs) to provide asset and tenancy management services at the John Stokes Square residential precinct, is a turning point in the way that social and affordable housing is delivered in the Territory, says peak body NT Shelter.

Executive Officer Peter McMillan said that the announcement was welcome and provided an opportunity to rethink the way in which new social and affordable housing was designed, built and managed, and in a way that ultimately delivered more vibrant and inclusive communities and better amenity.

"There has been very little positive news on the urban housing front over recent years, as waitlists have continued to grow and the overall amount of stock has declined due to demolition and sales of public housing assets. Today's announcement will hopefully mark the start of a new chapter in addressing what is a growing shortfall in housing, especially for those who are on low to medium incomes and unable to find an affordable place to rent", he said.

Figures released by the Northern Territory Government reveal that the number of applications on urban public housing waitlists has grown by 22% over the past two years alone.

Mr McMillan said that today's announcement confirmed that the Northern Territory Government was sincere in its stated commitment to grow the community housing sector in the Territory and increase the proportion of social housing tenancy and assets managed by CHPs.

"The NT already has its own experienced, well managed not-for-profit organisations with a proven track record in delivering social and affordable housing, albeit on a very small scale. Announcements like the one today by Minister Worden provides a great opportunity for a new approach to managing social housing and, in time, see more housing stock come online", said Mr McMillan.

"We know that CHPs, by virtue of their charitable status, can attract Commonwealth Rent Assistance, are exempt from GST and stamp duty, and can secure low-cost finance and philanthropic contributions generally not available to the NT Government. This means that there is definitely more bang for buck and better potential outcomes for tenants and communities too", he said.

Mr McMillan said that NT Shelter and its members were very keen to continue working closely with government to successfully implement a longer-term growth strategy for the registered community housing sector in 2022.



“While the overall housing shortage numbers are eye-watering, we are delighted by today’s news and the role that a registered community housing provider will play in the development of a revamped residential precinct. Growth opportunities like this will finally give them a chance to show what they can bring to the table for tenants and, ultimately, the broader community alike”, he said.

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