



## MEDIA RELEASE

26 August 2019

### **SPOTLIGHT ON HOUSING CHALLENGES AS 1,100 DELEGATES MEET IN DARWIN**

This week's National Housing Conference in Darwin, a collaboration between the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) and the NT Government, will provide a much needed focus on Australia's growing deficit in social and affordable housing and, importantly, the unique housing and homelessness challenges faced in the Territory, according to peak bodies NT Shelter and National Shelter.

NT Shelter Executive Officer Peter McMillan said he was encouraged by the fact that 1,100 delegates from across Australia would be in Darwin to discuss the state of play of social and affordable housing, and what needed to be done to end homelessness and provide the required housing infrastructure for the future.

"The state of social housing here in the NT is dire, with a mountain to climb to provide the additional housing necessary for tackling overcrowding, ending homelessness, and ensuring that we have well designed, constructed and maintained housing for families and kids to thrive", said Mr McMillan.

The rate of homelessness in the NT is 12 times the national average. However, under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA), the NT receives a mere 1.3%, or \$19 million, of the Commonwealth's \$1.4 billion contribution to the States and Territories. NT Shelter has made repeated calls for a revamped NHHA which distributes homelessness funding according to need rather than population size.

National Shelter Executive Officer Adrian Pisarski acknowledged the disproportionately high burden of homelessness in the Northern Territory, and the need for additional funding from the Commonwealth to address the unacceptable housing situation, especially for many Aboriginal families across the Territory.

"We stand side by side with the people of the Northern Territory in supporting calls for a higher level of investment in housing and homelessness services in the NT. This is a very small jurisdiction with a very large housing shortfall, arising from years of neglect and underinvestment. A national housing strategy is needed and one that recognises that the NT has uniquely difficult circumstances", said Mr Pisarski.

The conference will be held at the Darwin Convention Centre from Wednesday 28 August through to Friday 30 August, with presentations and workshops from leading researchers and practitioners across Australia and globally.

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*NT Shelter is a not-for-profit organisation that works towards a just and fairer housing system in the NT. We aim to ensure appropriate and affordable housing is available for everyone, especially disadvantaged groups and those on low incomes.*

*National Shelter is a non-government peak organisation that aims to improve housing access, affordability, appropriateness, safety and security for people on low incomes. Since 1976, National Shelter has worked towards this goal by influencing government policy and action, and by raising public awareness about housing issues.*

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