



MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW HOUSING MINISTERS WELCOMED TO DOUBLE THE FOCUS ON BIG CHALLENGES AHEAD

NT Shelter welcomes today's announcement of the appointment of Kate Worden as the new Minister for Territory Families and Urban Housing and Chansey Paech as the new Minister for Remote Housing and Town Camps.

The housing and homelessness peak body's Executive Officer, Peter McMillan, congratulated the new ministers on their appointments and said that it was important that the new Ministers are well supported in Cabinet and across the Chamber in order to succeed.

"Housing is a key portfolio in Government and its role cannot be overstated. We commend the appointment of two Ministers in recognition of the huge workload ahead.

"It is impossible to get effective cut-through in early childhood development, education, health, employment and the justice system if people are living in overcrowded, poorly functioning houses or if they don't have a home at all", Mr McMillan said.

Mr McMillan said that Ministers Paech and Worden will certainly have their work cut out for them and will face significant challenges in their portfolios.

"They'll be handed a housing strategy from the Department of Housing which says there is a shortfall of 8,000 to 12,000 homes over the next five years. The first thing that the incoming Ministers should do is insist on a plan from their Department to address that gap for both urban and remote communities alike".

Mr McMillan said that another key priority for the Ministers would be to head to Canberra to land a fairer deal for the Territory on homelessness funding.

"Receiving 1.3% of total Commonwealth funding when we have 12 times the problem is a terrible arrangement which must urgently be fixed. Ministers Worden and Paech will need to be strong advocates for the Territory in Canberra and effective negotiators to secure a fairer housing deal for the NT."

Closer to home, NT Shelter is looking for the two incoming Ministers to build influence in Cabinet in order to ensure that housing and homelessness services and initiatives are adequately resourced as a whole of Territory Government priority, and recognize the key role that social housing construction needs to play in economic development and recovery post COVID.



“If we keep doing what we’ve been doing on housing we will get the same results, and that includes public housing waitlists of 6 to 8 years and a net increase in housing stock of just 159 houses over three years. We’re now looking for Ministers Worden and Paech, and the Gunner Government more broadly, to challenge the status quo and embrace new ideas to break down the barriers that are preventing investment in social housing in the NT”, Mr McMillan said.

Mr McMillan referred to a recent deal in New South Wales that will see new housing constructed by community housing providers thanks to an agreement between the NSW State Government, the National Housing and Finance Investment Corporation (NHFIC) and superannuation giant Cbus.

“With a rate of homelessness that is twelve times bigger than other states and territories, the NT Government needs to be at the forefront of deals like this so that we too can get funds flowing to build more housing in the Territory”, Mr McMillan said.

NT Shelter and its members look forward to meeting with the new Ministers in the near future to outline what the housing and homelessness sector see as the most pressing priorities and what can be done in conjunction with non-government organisations to see real progress over the next four years.

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Fast facts

Under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA), the Northern Territory receives a total of \$19 million from the Commonwealth for its estimated homeless population of 13,717. In comparison, the Western Australian Government receives over eight times as much funding despite having only 65% as many homeless persons (\$160 million for a homeless population of 9,005).

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