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MEDIA RELEASE

Community housing welcomes Opposition proposals on housing affordability

The state's peak community housing body today backed calls for a state-wide affordable housing target as a key part of planning reforms to address the state's housing crisis.

NSW Federation of Housing Associations CEO Wendy Hayhurst congratulated the NSW Opposition on releasing a housing affordability discussion paper that looks beyond increasing housing supply as a solution for easing housing affordability.

Ms Hayhurst said the paper included sensible and achievable proposals to increase the supply of affordable housing options for buyers locked out of the housing market and for low and middle income earners needing safe affordable housing options.

These include extending complying development provisions for developments that deliver 20 per cent or more of affordable or social housing dwellings if built to recognised standards; targets for affordable housing on government owned land; and the need for a dedicated Minister for Housing as seen other states.

"Any proper discussion about solutions to housing affordability has been too focused on simply increasing housing supply and home ownership," Ms Hayhurst said.

"Housing supply on it's own isn't a silver bullet. We also need to look at what kind of housing we build, who needs it and where we're building it. Not everyone will be in a position to buy their own home any time soon. Nurses, child-care workers, aged care workers, and older people approaching retirement need well designed, affordable homes close to transport, services and jobs.

"There's no point just unlocking new subdivisions that are isolated from transport and employment hubs. Approving expensive high-rise unit blocks isn't going to address the issue if only investors can afford to buy them.

"Affordable housing is key infrastructure, it makes our city function. It needs to be an integral part of planning processes and it needs to be backed by government at all levels, including local councils."

The Federation is calling for 30 per cent affordable housing targets; streamlined approval processes for affordable housing projects; the transfer of public housing to the not for profit sector; the unlocking of government owned land for affordable housing projects; and government backing for financing models that encourage investment in affordable housing.

Ms Hayhurst said the Federation looked forward to providing a submission on the discussion paper.

Media contact: Jenny Stokes 0478 504 280