

Tuesday 6 October 2009

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## **Social Housing Taskforce Report Highlights the Severity of WA's Housing Affordability Crisis**

"The findings of the Social Housing Taskforce report clearly demonstrate that the West Australian housing system is failing to cater for the housing needs of a sharply increasing number of people on low and fixed incomes", WACOSS Acting CEO, Irina Cattalini, commented today.

WACOSS congratulates Minister for Housing Troy Buswell on his initiative in establishing the Taskforce, and commends the recommendations contained in its report, released this morning.

"The meteoric rise in house prices and rents over the last five years have left many low and fixed income households struggling to find and maintain accommodation. Over 21,000 households are on the waiting list, an increase of more than 22% in the past year. Public housing has declined to only 4% of the housing stock, compared to 6% in the 1990s. This is lower than the Australian average and significantly below social housing stocks in comparable jurisdictions abroad. The Department of Housing's ability to help those frozen out of the private market has seriously diminished.

"Successive governments have failed to make the investment in social housing that our state requires. As a result, we are now at crisis point. As the report attests, a growing and ageing population is going to increase demand for social and affordable housing. Dealing with this reality must now become a top priority for government, the community and the private sector.

"There are opportunities available to improve the housing system. The Taskforce has produced a number of new and innovative proposals in relation to social housing provision. These include policies to encourage greater private sector involvement in social housing provision, as is commonplace in other developed economies. The report also details a number of strategies to help social housing tenants transition to more mainstream forms of housing.

"The Treasurer should be under no illusions however, about the centrality of government investment in the development of workable solutions. Private and community sector involvement has the potential to compliment governments' role, however, it cannot replace it.

"There is no escaping the fact that a significant and sustained increase in WA's social housing stock will be fundamental to success and government funding needs to underpin that expansion.

"WACOSS welcomes the acknowledgement in the report that any expansion of the social housing system must be accompanied by a commensurate increase in services that provide for the well being of tenants. These will include aged care services, mental health services and disability care," concluded Ms Cattalini.

**For further comment:**  
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