

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 14 July 2015

WACOSS welcomes boost to WA affordable housing target

The Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) welcomed the commitment today by Premier Colin Barnett of an additional 10,000 affordable homes by 2020.

It came as Housing Minister Colin Holt announced the State Affordable Housing Strategy reached its' goal of 20,000 affordable homes today – five years ahead of the 2020 target.

“The commitment of the WA Government to deliver more affordable housing for lower income Western Australians is as important as ever,” said WACOSS Director of Policy Chris Twomey today.

“The Opening Doors Strategy has achieved great results, but the need to boost affordable housing is an ongoing challenge and must remain a Government priority.”

“This new announcement follows the commitment of \$560m over two years in the State Budget to deliver an extra 1000 homes in public and community housing and halve the priority waitlist.

“Of the 20,000 affordable homes delivered to date, 27% went into social housing and 13% to affordable rentals (NRAS) for those on lower incomes. Maintaining this balance of lower income housing in the new target will require continuing that level of investment up to 2020.

“Abode Apartments are an excellent example of a well-designed infill development that provides affordable housing in proximity to jobs and services - next-door to the Citywest train-station. They are modern functional apartments and the development has a good mix of premium and affordable units for sale, shared-equity places, social housing and affordable rentals.

“The Council has also repeated its concerns about the likely impact that proposed cuts to financial counselling services could have on social housing tenants, and others in similar circumstances of financial hardship.

“Providing timely support to help those facing financial hardship better manage their money and avoid defaulting on their rent or mortgage can prevent spiraling debt costs, bankruptcy, eviction or homelessness. That is why we are suggesting a moratorium on service cuts while a new cross-government program is developed to adequately and efficiently support those most at risk.

“This new affordable housing target is a significant commitment by the Premier to deliver on a major priority for the community services sector - ensuring that disadvantaged and vulnerable Western Australians have access to safe and affordable housing that is well designed and located,” concluded Mr. Twomey.

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