

Micah response to consultation re: National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation

Who we are: Micah Projects is a community based not-for-profit organisation with a vision to create justice and respond to injustice at the personal, social and structural levels in church, government, business and society. Since its beginning in 1995, Micah's mission has been to respond to people who experience exclusion, injustice, violence and social isolation so that they may experience inclusion, economic wellbeing, justice, safety and connection within their community of choice. Micah Projects works to break down barriers that exclude people from housing, healthcare, employment, meaningful connections, and to give people a voice. We assist and support each individual or family including children, to resolve crisis, break social isolation, have a home, access health and community services, and build community. Micah Projects provides a range of support and advocacy services to individuals and families according to their needs and capacity. For more information go to: <http://micahprojects.org.au/>

Overview: At a national level there is a need for both a Housing and Homelessness objectives under the any new Federal Agreement.

Need to embrace a Housing First Framework – see **Housing First Fact Sheet** and **Housing First Roadmap** attached.

Targeted homelessness programs provides savings across government and these cost savings needs to be considered across government not simply within departments see page 7 **Housing First Roadmap** and <http://micahprojects.org.au/assets/docs/Publications/201704-Pathways-Indicative-Cost-Benefit-Analysis.pdf>

Some key elements that need to be considered going forward include:

- The provision of secure and affordable housing, with the appropriate level of support matched to personal need, is the foundation for: improved physical and mental health; safe and functional families, reduced out-of-home care; reduced demand on the justice and correctional systems; and increased economic and social participation.
- Housing planning should address supply of housing and ensure housing is suitable, affordable, of appropriate quality and support long-term tenure stability.
- Responsible public housing planning should also aim to positively influence and ease the pressures of demand through proactively establishing key strategic collaborations and partnerships with other housing and non-housing stakeholders.
- Currently, there is a critical need for increased supply of affordable housing (rent does not exceed 30% of income).
- Reduce over and under-servicing and through evidence-based objective of need using the Service Prioritisation Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT).
- A comprehensive housing plan needs to cover more than “bricks and mortar”, it also needs to include strategies that focus on the support required to provide sustainable housing options for people with barriers to sustaining housing.
 - As a priority dedicated post-housing support is necessary to assist medium and high acuity people to sustain housing.
- A holistic housing plan needs to consider homelessness and housing as a continuum, not separate systems to build a successful integrated approach that minimises systemic barriers to housing.

- Wrap around services need to include community-based health, mental health (including clinical), drug and alcohol, family support, legal services, employment and training, and social cohesion models that promote community inclusiveness.
- A social housing plan should foster diversity in communities and enhance social well-being, creating meaningful communities, through designing and providing shared resources and spaces that connect lives.

Please do not hesitate to contact Micah Project CEO Ms Karyn Walsh (Karyn.walsh@micahprojects.org.au) if you require more information or clarification.

Regards

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A just society is a sustainable society

