



Housing Ministers' Conference

COMMUNIQUE

Melbourne, Friday 22 May 2009

HOUSING MINISTERS TAKE ACTION ON HOUSING REFORMS

Housing Ministers from the Commonwealth, States and Territories and New Zealand met in Melbourne today with Australian Ministers agreeing on an extensive work program to reform the social housing system at both a State and National level.

Priority areas of work over the next six months include: options for the development of new funding models for Commonwealth funding assistance for social housing more explicitly linked to the number of households accommodated; development of national tenancy and management standards that can be benchmarked across the whole social housing sector; and consideration of ways to help social housing tenants move into private rental and home ownership.

Ministers discussed the social and economic disadvantages linked to high concentrations of social housing and agreed to focus on areas where social housing concentrations contribute to poor social and economic outcomes.

Ministers discussed the need to expand the not-for-profit sector. Ministers agreed to expedite work on an industry development strategy for the not-for-profit housing sector. As a first step, Ministers agreed on a target of transferring up to 75 per cent of the housing stock funded under the Nation Building and Jobs Package to the community housing sector within the next five years. This would see the community housing sector grow by up to 15,000 dwellings by 2014.

Ministers discussed models for the national regulation of the not-for-profit housing sector that would provide greater protection for tenants and governments and greater assurance for investors in affordable rental housing. Ministers also agreed to progress independent prudential supervision of social housing providers to protect public investment in the sector.

Ministers discussed the importance of adequate housing to improving the living standards of Indigenous Australian, and noted that 60 per cent of Indigenous households are renting compared to 27 per cent of other households. Ministers agreed to consider options to increase home ownership among Indigenous Australians and also agreed to a series of audits of the current provision of municipal services and infrastructure to Indigenous communities.

Housing Ministers will provide a detailed progress report on the affordable housing reforms to the Council of Australian Governments in late 2009.

Ministers discussed the issues affecting people living in residential caravan parks and villages including lack of coverage by existing tenancy laws and the risk of homelessness as a result of the sale and redevelopment of parks.

Ministers welcomed the opportunity to further discuss the housing reform agenda with Planning Ministers at a joint meeting in October 2009.

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