



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Target for affordable housing is still not on the table**

The lack of affordable housing has reached crisis proportions and is making it impossible for working people on low incomes – childcare workers, nurses, teachers, baristas – to find homes close to where they work.

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW held a forum at Parliament House on 15 June which provided a platform for the major parties to lay out their positions and join in the conversation about finding solutions to the widespread problem of the affordable housing shortfall.

Denis Walsh, President St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, said it was clear the overwhelming view of researchers and organisations working in the housing sector was that a target is required.

“The Society would like to see the construction of at least 25,000 new dwellings in 10 years and also the requirement that all new developments include at least 15 per cent of affordable housing,” Mr Walsh said.

“The Society’s frontline staff and 25,000 members and volunteers across the state are witnessing firsthand the profound impacts that the lack of adequate affordable housing is having on people’s lives.

“The issue is no longer just about public or social housing. The workers who make our communities thrive have longer and more expensive commutes. We know that people are moving out as far as Lithgow because places as far from the city as Penrith have become unaffordable.”

A federal \$10 billion social and affordable housing fund was the key plank in the Society's recent *The Ache for Home* plan to reduce chronic homelessness and housing unaffordability.

Other key national measures included:

- Increasing Commonwealth assistance
- Adopting changes to negative gearing and capital gains tax rules, which have benefited investors to the detriment of those who simply need a home to live in
- Making sure housing is considered a human right that the Government must guarantee to all Australian residents.

At the forum Peter McNamara, Vice President for Social Justice, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, said that representatives from all the major parties were invited to speak at the forum, as well as other representatives from the housing and homelessness sectors.

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“The Greens NSW have outlined a policy for an affordable housing target and we believe it is imperative that all parties make a commitment to social and affordable housing.”

“The perspectives provided by Associate Professor Kurt Iveson, Urban Geography, University of Sydney, and Reverend Bill Crews, Exodus Foundation, were thought-provoking. They highlighted the need for immediate action, starting at a grassroots level, which organisations like the Society can lead. By holding regular forums and hearing the groundswell of community concerns, a change may happen.”

“More homes, built sustainably to ensure lower energy costs, is one sure way to reduce the scourge of poverty and homelessness in Australia, one of the world’s wealthiest nations.”

The other speakers at the forum were:

- Hon. Michael Daley, Member for Maroubra, Shadow Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Deputy Leader NSW Opposition
- Jamie Parker, Member for Balmain, The Greens
- Paul Green, MLC, Christian Democratic Party
- Cr Linda Scott, City of Sydney
- Claire Johnstone, Sydney Youth representative, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW
- Peter McNamara, Vice President for Social Justice, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW
- MC: Paul Murray, Sky News.

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