

# Social and Affordable Housing

## Welcome investment to address social and affordable housing shortages

Investment in social and affordable housing was a centrepiece of the 2021-22 State Budget. A record \$2.1 billion was committed, which will deliver funding for around 3,300 homes. This includes \$884 million in additional funding for social housing and homelessness.

The new initiatives included in the Budget were:

- a \$750 million Social Housing Investment Fund for new dwelling construction projects and other initiatives that will increase social housing supply. Of this, the majority (\$552.5 million) has been set aside to provide to agencies as project business cases are approved. \$228 million has also been committed for specific initiatives as part of the Social Housing Strategy Package including:
  - \$142 million to convert 432 homes from the State housing program to social housing between now and 2023;
  - \$55.1 million for restorative work on the Department's housing stock in 2021-22;
  - \$12.8 million to improve asset management;
  - \$6 million to extend the life of 120 homes that were slated for demolition; and
  - \$5.4 million to operate and maintain additional housing stock.
- \$20 million to renew three ageing social housing precincts in Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton;
- \$26 million to convert 72 dwellings for the METRONET Social and Affordable Housing and Jobs Package into social housing;
- \$6 million for a Local Government Partnership Fund for Homelessness;
- \$3.4 million over 4 years to expand the Youth futures crisis accommodation;
- \$38.5 million for expanded capacity at two Common Ground facilities in Perth and Mandurah; and
- \$50 million in 2021-22 for a spot purchasing program in both metropolitan and regional areas.

The Government has also announced the reprioritisation of funding from existing programs, with \$70 million brought forward to 2021-22 and 2022-23 to fast track the delivery of modular social housing in the regions.

The Government has allocated \$97.2 million for investment in Government Regional Officers' Housing stock over 2021-22 to 2024-25.

Social and affordable housing is a priority for many Local Governments, and the record \$2.1 billion investment over the next four years is welcome.

WALGA recognises that Local Government through its planning, health, community development and regulatory powers can facilitate positive local and regional responses to end homelessness, but that the State Government has the lead role in addressing homelessness. The lack of social housing stock over many years has contributed to a growing homelessness issue, and significant investment is required to ensure there is an adequate supply of social housing to support vulnerable community members.

There are expected to be significant opportunities for Local Governments to engage with the programs announced in the Budget. In particular, Local Government will have an opportunity to identify council owned properties that are used for GROH for assessment (and possible refurbishment); identify properties that could be made available for spot purchasing; opportunities for local businesses in construction and maintenance jobs; and opportunities to partner with Community Housing Organisations for social housing projects.

Not all Local Governments have welcomed the \$6 million Local Government Partnership Fund for Homelessness, with many seeing homelessness as a State Government priority. Others however have demonstrated an ability to tackle homelessness on behalf of their communities and for these Local Governments this funding is good news.

Local Governments are a crucial partner in addressing housing and homelessness issues in their communities, and can assist to ensure funding is directed to areas in greatest need, and to put in place planning to identify shortfalls. The need for further investment in GROH and homelessness outreach services was identified in [WALGA's Priorities for Government](#) document.