

# Queensland Budget | 2024 – 2025

## End Queensland's Housing Crisis

The full human impact of the housing crisis must remain front of mind when delivering the 2024 budget measures. The community sector in Queensland is witnessing distressing levels of housing need, with workers expressing that demand for services and the unmet need for social and affordable housing is the highest they have ever experienced.<sup>1</sup>

In March 2023, QCOSS, Tenants Queensland and The Services Union, along with the [Town of Nowhere](#) campaign partners commissioned the report '[A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis](#)' (The Pawson Report), which clearly outlines the unprecedented housing crisis in Queensland and the vulnerabilities that exist in the housing system.<sup>2</sup>

Queensland "...has experienced the highest rate of population growth of any jurisdiction in the past 20 years, the near stagnation in social housing stock numbers during that time has seen an unusually large contraction in [housing] sector adequacy."<sup>3</sup> The Pawson Report found approximately 150,000 households in Queensland have an unmet need for affordable housing due to homelessness, risk of homelessness, or housing stress. Over 100,000 of those households were also eligible for social housing based on household income.<sup>4</sup>

QCOSS acknowledges the Queensland Government's commitment of \$5 billion for social and affordable housing, and housing and homelessness supports. This includes a commitment to provide, on average, \$130 million every year from the \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund, that will be invested into affordable and social housing outcomes and help to commence construction of 13,500 social and affordable dwellings by 30 June 2027.<sup>5</sup> However, this commitment is immensely insufficient to end the housing crisis and the unmet need for secure and affordable housing in Queensland.

QCOSS urges the Queensland Government to do all that it can to end the housing crisis within the next 10 years through the implementation of a whole of government plan with an ambitious goal of ending housing need within a decade.

As a priority, the 2024-2025 Queensland Budget must:

<sup>1</sup> Queensland Council of Social Service, [State of the Sector Report 2022](#).

<sup>2</sup> H Pawson, A Clarke, J Moore, R van den Nouwelant, and M Ng, (2023), [A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis](#), Queensland Council of Social Service.

<sup>3</sup> H Pawson, A Clarke, J Moore, R van den Nouwelant, and M Ng, [A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis](#), (2023), Queensland Council of Social Service, 13.

<sup>4</sup> H Pawson, A Clarke, J Moore, R van den Nouwelant, and M Ng, (2023), [A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis](#), Queensland Council of Social Service, 79.

<sup>5</sup> Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing, (13 June 2023), [Ministerial Media Statement – Record housing investment bolstered in State Budget](#), Queensland Government.

# 1. Increase the supply of high-quality social and affordable rental housing to meet current and future need (Supply)

## Supply of social and affordable housing

The supply of housing in Queensland is not adequate for the growing population.<sup>6</sup> With the population expected to grow to 6 million by 2046,<sup>7</sup> and the estimated representation of social housing across Queensland at just 3.4 per cent of all dwellings, social and affordable housing supply in Queensland must increase significantly.<sup>8</sup>

The Queensland Government must explore all options to increase the supply of accessible social and affordable housing, including by leveraging funding from the Commonwealth Government, and working closely with local councils, community housing providers and the private sector.

At least 11,000 new social and affordable homes must be delivered each year to meet current estimates of future need for social and affordable housing in Queensland, and of those, 2,700 homes must be social housing for people eligible for social housing.<sup>9</sup>

To address the unmet need for affordable housing the government must:

- increase funding for new social housing to \$1.79 billion per annum to deliver a minimum of 2,700 new social housing homes each year (funding must be reviewed and increased annually based on modeling of housing need and estimated costs of construction).<sup>10</sup>
- increase funding for the QuickStart Program and other initiatives to deliver an additional 8,300 social and affordable homes each year. Initiatives should include:
  - private and community sector partnerships and leveraging Federal Government resources
  - phasing in inclusionary zoning
  - mandating inclusion of social and affordable rental housing when selling or leasing public land for residential developments
  - acting on opportunities to undertake housing estate renewal to extract more dwellings from existing sites, as well as to replace or upgrade obsolete dwellings
  - enhancing incentives and subsidies to increase delivery of build-to-rent projects that are affordable for people with low to moderate incomes.

## Permanent supportive housing framework

For many of the people our members work with, availability and affordability of housing alone will not solve homelessness. People with complex and high support needs often require improved permanent access to healthcare, cultural connection, daily living support, and community services to sustain their wellbeing and housing.

Permanent supportive housing is a proven solution for ending chronic homelessness by providing dignified and quality housing and support services for people with complex and high support needs.<sup>11,12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> H Pawson, A Clarke, J Moore, R van den Nouwelant, and M Ng, (2023), A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis, Queensland Council of Social Service.

<sup>7</sup> Queensland Government, (2023), Draft Shaping SEQ Regional Plan Update, Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, 11

<sup>8</sup> H Pawson, A Clarke, J Moore, R van den Nouwelant, and M Ng, (2023), A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis, Queensland Council of Social Service, 9.

<sup>9</sup> H Pawson, A Clarke, J Moore, R van den Nouwelant, and M Ng, (2023), A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis, Queensland Council of Social Service, 66, 81.

<sup>10</sup> H Pawson, A Clarke, J Moore, R van den Nouwelant, and M Ng, (2023), A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis, Queensland Council of Social Service, 79.

<sup>11</sup> Padgett, D., Henwood, B. F., & Tsemberis, S. J. (2016). *Housing First: Ending homelessness, transforming systems, and changing lives*. Oxford University Press, USA.

<sup>12</sup> Roggenbuck, C. (2022) Housing First: An evidence review of implementation, effectiveness and outcomes, report prepared by AHURI, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne.

Funding must be allocated to establish a permanent supportive housing framework, and to ensure that 10 per cent of all new social housing be developed as permanent supportive housing using a housing first approach for people with high support needs.<sup>13</sup>

## Specialist Homelessness Services

To ensure all Queenslanders have a roof over their head, integrated service delivery and investment in services is required, particularly when people and families experience a housing crisis or are seeking to stabilise their lives immediately following a housing crisis. To meet the current high demand for services, funding for crisis and outreach services must be increased.

Funding for Specialist Homelessness Services must be increased by at least 20 per cent to ensure the service system is adequately resourced to connect people into permanent housing options as quickly as possible.

## Solutions for families, children, young people, and people who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

People who have experienced family and domestic violence, young people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples continue to be at a higher risk of homelessness than other people in Queensland.<sup>14</sup>

QCOSS recommends allocating a percentage of all new homes to support the specific needs of families with children, young people and people who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiencing homelessness.

Increased funding must be allocated to new housing and support services, for:

- specialised supportive housing for youth, such as Youth Foyers<sup>15</sup>
- supportive housing for families experiencing family and domestic violence
- community-controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing.<sup>16</sup>

“In relation to Youth Foyers, the average 40-bed Youth Foyer costs an average of \$15-\$20 million to build, and \$1.6-\$2m in recurrent operating costs. Young people live in a Youth Foyer for between 1-2 years, creating flow through the service system towards independence from the service system and freeing up capacity in the system. This investment is cost-effective because it gets results for young people and generates cost savings for Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments over time.”<sup>17</sup>

In addition, financial incentives must be provided by government to ensure that housing young people in community housing does not result in a financial disadvantage for housing providers. This incentive could be delivered as an increased rental subsidy.

<sup>13</sup> Homelessness Australia, (8 October 2023), [About Housing First – Homelessness Australia](https://homelessnessaustralia.org.au/homelessness-resources/housing-first/about-housing-first/), <https://homelessnessaustralia.org.au/homelessness-resources/housing-first/about-housing-first/>

<sup>14</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (7 September 2023), *Homelessness and Homelessness Services*, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/homelessness-and-homelessness-services>

<sup>15</sup> The Youth Foyer Foundation (2022) *Under One Roof: The social and economic impact of youth foyers*, Accenture.

<sup>16</sup> H Pawson, A Clarke, J Moore, R van den Nouwelant, and M Ng, (2023), *A blueprint to tackle Queensland’s housing crisis*, Queensland Council of Social Service, 92.

Foyer Invest, (October 2023), *Foyer Invest National Housing and Homelessness Plan Submission Oct 2023*, <https://foyer.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/FoyerInvest-National-Housing-and-Homelessness-Plan-Submission-Oct-2023.pdf>, 17.

## 2. Ensure the private rental market provides appropriate, secure, quality and energy efficient housing, including for Queenslanders on low incomes (Security)

### Private rental market

Just over 30 per cent of Queensland households were renters in 2021.<sup>18</sup> Adding to housing stress, vacancy rates for available rentals remain extremely low at an average of one per cent across Queensland as of June 2023,<sup>19</sup> and rent increased a further 13.3 per cent on average across Queensland during the 12 months to 30 June 2023.<sup>20</sup>

The current housing crisis demonstrates the vulnerability of renters in an insufficiently regulated rental market. Strengthening rental market regulation is an immediate policy option to help reduce the impact of the housing crisis.<sup>21</sup>

The Queensland Government must allocate funding to successfully implement stage two rental reforms that strengthen protections for renters. QCOSS understands legislation will soon be introduced in response to the Stage 2 Rental Law Reform Government consultation. We have consistently highlighted these reforms should include:

- limits to rent increases by an amount calculated in reference to the Consumer Price Index and include mechanisms to effectively limit frequency of increases. We draw particular attention to the approach adopted in the Australian Capital Territory in relation to rent increases<sup>22</sup>
- an end to 'without grounds' evictions, including no grounds evictions at the end of a fixed term agreement
- allowing for the installation of modifications and making minor personalisation changes, underpinned by a practical dispute resolution framework
- implementation of energy efficiency standards for rental properties.<sup>23</sup>

In relation to energy efficiency standards for renters, we draw particular attention to the *Community Sector Blueprint: A National Framework for Minimum Energy Efficiency Rental Requirements*.<sup>24</sup> This blueprint outlines key characteristics that should be present in the forthcoming National Framework for Minimum Energy Efficiency Rental Requirements. Energy efficiency measures will assist tenants in managing their energy bills, and will help to make homes safer and healthier to live in. Energy efficiency incentives along with regulatory requirements will help to ensure that the transition to a cleaner energy future is a just transition, which does not leave anyone behind.

As a supporter of the Power Together Campaign<sup>25</sup> and Healthy Homes for Renters Campaign,<sup>26</sup> QCOSS proposes that specific funding must be allocated to work with the Federal Government and other Australian States and Territories to deliver an ambitious National Framework for Minimum Energy Efficiency Rental Requirements and ensure mandatory minimum energy efficiency rental standards are implemented as soon as possible in Queensland.

<sup>18</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Data 2021

<sup>19</sup> SQM Research, REIQ Quarterly Residential Vacancy Reports, June 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Residential Tenancy Authority (RTA), Queensland Government. Median rents quarterly data June 2023

<sup>21</sup> H Pawson, A Clarke, J Moore, R van den Nouwelant, and M Ng, (2023), [A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis](#), Queensland Council of Social Service, 94.

<sup>22</sup> *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (ACT) ss 64A – 70; *Residential Tenancies Regulation 1998* (ACT) s 5A.

<sup>23</sup> Queensland Council of Social service, (2023), Submission to the Inquiry into the worsening rental crisis in Australia.

<sup>24</sup> Healthy Homes for Renters, [Community Sector Blueprint: a National Framework for Minimum Energy Efficiency Rental Requirements](#), (November, 2022).

<sup>25</sup> Power Together Campaign (1 November 2023), Power Together - Relief, Renewables, Resilience - Power Together, <https://powertogether.org.au/>

<sup>26</sup> Healthy Homes for Renters, (1 November 2023), <https://www.healthyhomes.org.au/>

## Short-Term Accommodation

Consideration must be given to the potential impact of short-term rentals in key areas in Queensland where short-term rentals are more prevalent. In Queensland, this includes areas such as the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast.

Funding must be allocated to develop a method to monitor and understand the impact of short-term rentals, and to respond if it demonstrates a significant impact on affordability and availability of housing.<sup>27</sup>

### 3. Establish and maintain mechanisms to ensure delivery and transparent reporting on commitments (Implementation)

Establishing and maintaining mechanisms to ensure delivery and transparent reporting on commitments are fundamental features of robust planning, delivery and monitoring of progress toward specific measures and strategic goals.

The Queensland Government has announced they are responding to the housing crisis through the development of a new comprehensive 20-year Queensland Housing Plan.<sup>28</sup> The Plan must include specific targets with associated detailed actions that are quantified and time specific, costed, resourced, and monitored, with outcomes reported frequently and transparently to enable adjustments to be made should initiatives prove not to be effective.<sup>29</sup> For example, specific supply targets for social and affordable housing must be included in the Plan.

Funding must be allocated to enable effective plan management including establishment of specific measures, monitoring against measures, and frequent and transparent public reporting in relation to plan deliverables.

<sup>27</sup> H Pawson, A Clarke, J Moore, R van den Nouwelant, and M Ng, (2023), [A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis](#), Queensland Council of Social Service, 95.

<sup>28</sup> Conversation with Director-General of Queensland Department of Housing Mark Cridland, (Queensland Council of Social Service, Brisbane Queensland, 17 October 2023), <https://youtu.be/hR9ip7rvROU>

<sup>29</sup> H Pawson, A Clarke, J Moore, R van den Nouwelant, and M Ng, (2023), [A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis](#), Queensland Council of Social Service, 86.