



IPART New South Wales  
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### **Submission on the Review of Social and Affordable Housing Rent Models**

I am making this submission as a private citizen who is not a social housing tenant, although I have worked for many years with vulnerable people who are currently, or are waiting to be, public housing tenants.

Many such people will have chosen not to make a personal submission themselves, either because they do not have the resources to, because they weren't made aware of this review, or because they have grown used to having their opinions ignored or generally being marginalised.

It is important for NSW to have social housing as an option available to people who are not able to secure housing on the open market. People who have access to secure, safe and appropriate housing are more able to stay mentally healthy, to maintain employment and to nurture their children and families as they grow.

The current system is inadequate. A new applicant likely to expect to wait 15 years for a property to be allocated in Sydney after being accepted and placed on a waiting list. If a person is assessed to go onto the 'priority' list they could still expect to be on the list for some years, depending on where they need to live. For this reason, the review of social and affordable housing rent models is important and welcome.

In making its recommendations I would like for IPART to recognize that social and affordable housing tenants are not responsible for the obscene growth in house prices in Sydney, nor should they be obliged to bear the cost of fixing the system where the governments in Australia have consistently neglected their responsibility.

In making its recommendations I would like for IPART to recognize that many tenants of social and affordable housing are unable to work either through disability, commitments to caring for children or family members, or because they haven't been able to find the right job yet. It would not be reasonable to expect that any significant number of tenants would choose to move from a pension to work as a response to a change in their rent, as a lot of these tenants do not have this choice available to them.

In making its recommendations I would like for IPART to recognize that Centrelink pensions have not increased at the same rate as the increases in the cost of housing, particularly in Sydney. If rents were to be changed significantly then many social and affordable housing tenants would find themselves with less money each fortnight, after housing is paid for, and would struggle without additional financial assistance.

In making its recommendations I would for IPART to recognize that those in our community who have limited income often have limited capacity to work due often to disability, caring commitments or limited work options available. Often people on low incomes experience significant discrimination and limited opportunities to advance themselves. It should be the position of IPART and of the Government that systems be in place to protect these people's housing opportunities so that they are not disadvantaged against more wealthier tenants, and that they have the same housing opportunities available to them – including location and size.

In ensuring sustainability of social and affordable housing, rather than putting extra burden on some of the most vulnerable people in society, I would like for the government to prioritise bringing down the cost of housing through introducing policies aimed at making housing a less attractive option for investors and speculators.

I thank IPART for considering my submission.

