



Affordable Housing Action Plan 2017-18 to 2019-20



Contents

Message from the Minister for Housing	1	5. A new target for 2020.....	15
Introducing the Affordable Housing Action Plan 2017/18 to 2019/20	2	6. Key highlights.....	16
1. About affordable housing.....	4	7. Questions and answers	17
2. Goals	7	8. Actions 2017/18 to 2019/20	18
3. Focus areas	12	9. What the Affordable Housing Action Plan means for our Regions	25
4. Principles	14		

Why we need an Affordable Housing Action Plan



Housing is so much more than simply a roof over our heads. It provides a foundation for individual, family and community wellbeing and gives us a personal sense of place and home. It is where we raise our families, get involved in neighbourhood activities, and maybe even borrow against to start a small business. For our most vulnerable citizens, a home provides much-needed stability and connection to the community. Secure, affordable housing also contributes to our social and economic outcomes, and is central to a fair and prosperous Western Australia.

Increasingly, the private market is not able to meet the needs of people on lower incomes, with rising housing costs outstripping income growth. Accordingly, governments at all levels, along with the private and community sectors, must work creatively and collectively together.

Efforts to date under the affordable housing strategy led by the former Housing Authority have made a real difference. But we know that affordable housing is still out of reach for many Western Australians, even though our property market has been in a downswing over the past few years, and affordability overall has improved. Even now, working people earning minimum wages can't afford to rent, let alone buy a home. Although

the causes are complex, and largely not within State Government control, as a government and community we must not accept this outcome.

To help address this challenge, the McGowan Government has committed to an Affordable Housing Action Plan (the Plan) that will continue the good work that started as soon as we took office. Endorsed by Cabinet, this includes a greater focus on:

- the connections between **people, place and home**;
- **real and enduring affordability** for people on low to moderate incomes;
- earlier and more **connected housing and support services** to enable better outcomes for vulnerable individuals and families;
- leveraging government roles and investment to create diverse **transit-aligned precincts** that include options for lower income earners; and
- developing **different options to meet different needs** across the housing continuum and across the State.

Led by the Department of Communities, and backed by across-government action, the Plan will deliver strong social and economic outcomes for Western Australia. This includes increasing the previous government's

2010-2020 target of 30,000 homes for people on low to moderate incomes to over 35,000. And investing in new construction that will support \$2.3bn in economic activity and almost 6,000 jobs.

In the difficult financial environment our government faces, delivering more homes and better outcomes will mean focusing on reforming what doesn't work, making better use of existing land and housing, trying new things, and creating opportunities in new developments including METRONET precincts. This will lay a foundation for a new and more expansive Strategy in 2020 when the State's fiscal position has improved.

Collaborative effort for collective impact, investing in what works, and working more proactively to help people find their own pathways will be the cornerstones of our approach. The impact of unaffordable housing now touches many of us, and needs all of our efforts to resolve. This is simply too important to leave to chance and I invite you to join us in finding new ways to tackle this important challenge.

Hon Peter Tinley AM MLA
Minister for Housing; Veterans Issues; Youth

May 2018



Introducing the Affordable Housing Action Plan 2017/18 to 2019/20

The aim of our Plan is to achieve better outcomes for individuals and families, deliver inclusive and connected communities and create a housing system that is more responsive to a broader range of needs.

This focus is needed because changes in our housing market have seen housing affordability become a structural, rather than cyclical problem in the last 10-15 years. This means it is beyond simple supply-demand arguments¹ (i.e. if supply is increased then prices will moderate to meet need) and a problem that will not self-correct. The private market simply cannot produce homes at prices that people on lower incomes can afford, especially in high cost areas. The outcome is that many people on good incomes can't afford to buy a home, and people on very low incomes can't afford to rent one.

Accordingly our Plan continues to focus on initiatives across the whole system and housing continuum - from homelessness through to home ownership. It builds on the existing 'opening doors' affordable housing strategy while placing greater emphasis on where and how people live, not just what they live in.



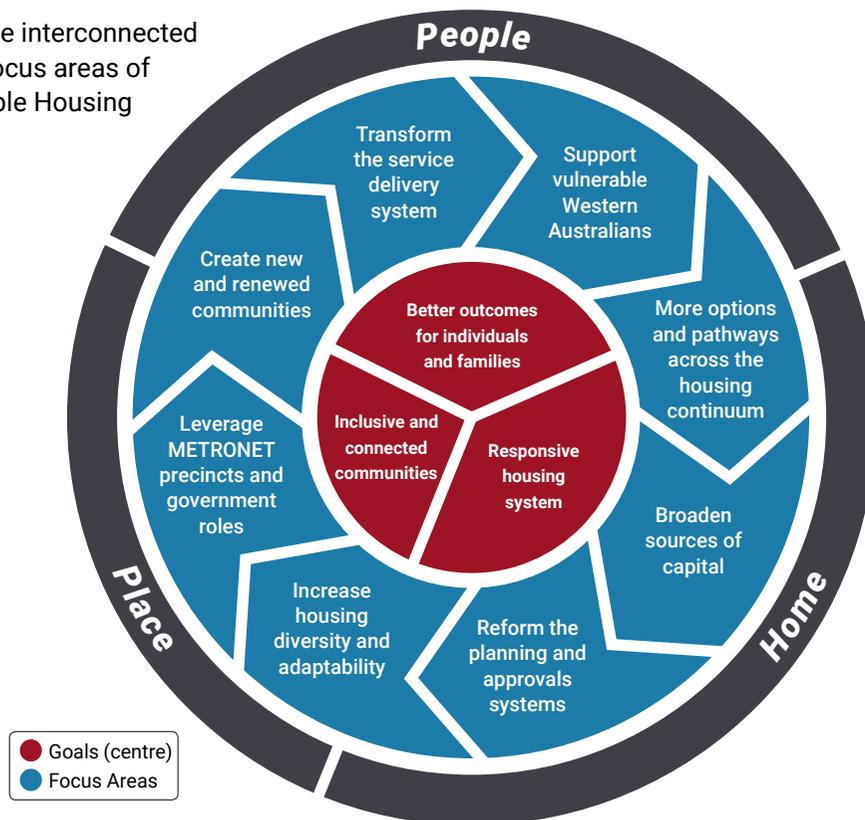
¹ As highlighted by the Housing Industry Forecasting Group 2016-17 Report, WA has long had the highest supply relative to population in Australia and has generally been considered to have been in a recent period of oversupply. Yet high supply and falling prices have had almost no impact on access for people on the lowest incomes.

Introducing the Affordable Housing Action Plan 2017/18 to 2019/20

The Plan has three goals and eight focus areas which were informed by people in government, industry and the community sector during 2017, as well as recent machinery of government changes. In particular, the creation of the Department of Communities (from the former entities dealing with housing, child protection

and family support, disability services, communities, regional services reform and others) will help drive more person-centred and place-based outcomes, with its property development role helping to ensure that housing is accessible to those who need it, where they need it.

Figure 1: The interconnected goals and focus areas of the Affordable Housing Action Plan.





1. About affordable housing

What is affordable housing?

Affordable housing is not just about price. It is about what people can afford relative to their income, particularly households in the lowest two income bands (currently less than \$70,000 per annum). Housing is considered affordable when it costs no more than 30% of gross household income. For example, a household on \$45,000 per annum can only afford to pay \$250 per week in rent without being in housing stress.

The term affordable housing encompasses all types of tenure, not just social housing. Social housing is a high cost response targeted to those most in need. It is predominantly delivered by government as public housing, complemented by the community housing and local government sectors.



Figure 2: The housing continuum.

Who needs affordable housing?

People on very low incomes may need heavily subsidised responses like social housing, while those on moderate incomes may need lighter touch home ownership assistance. People on the lower end of the low-income band often earn too much for the heavily rationed social housing system and too little to access home ownership. Consequently, there are multiple gaps along the housing continuum impacting all sections of our community.

This includes young people wanting to leave the family home, key workers needing to be closer to job opportunities, older people looking to right-size, people with a disability seeking to live independently within the community, Aboriginal people seeking to stay connected to land and community and vulnerable families reliant on fixed incomes. The Plan and its predecessor strategy have a strong focus on providing more pathways, focussed specifically on households with very low through to moderate incomes as shown below ².



² Income bands based on ABS household income for Perth (2016 Census indexed by wage price index. ABS Cat No. 6345.0) Current as at December Qtr 2017.

How affordable is Western Australia?

As is the case across Australia, Perth and major population centres in our regions may rate highly in terms of liveability but are often in the top 20 in the world in terms of poor housing affordability. As shown in Figures 3 and 4, even at the apparent bottom of the market cycle, Perth rents and house prices remain out of reach for many people³, and we know that:

- improved affordability is not reaching people on the lowest incomes. Average Perth rents have fallen significantly from highs of \$475 per week, but even at \$350 per week only 2% of available lettings are affordable to people on an aged or disability pension. Less than 10% are affordable for someone on the minimum wage;
- purchasing is difficult even for those on moderate incomes. Key workers on \$75,000 per annum can't afford to purchase an entry level home (\$415,000) and keep repayments below 30% of income. Even households on \$110,000 per annum can take 14 years to save a 10% deposit while renting; and

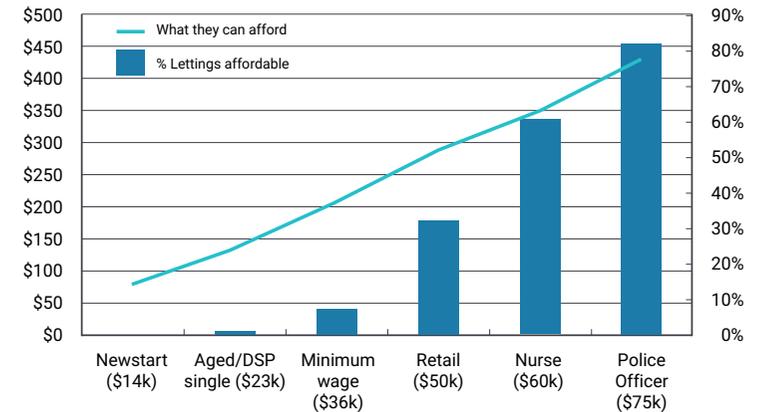
- while some regional markets are no longer experiencing the extraordinary crisis they once did, median dwelling prices outside the metropolitan area have continued to increase, with South West centres like Busselton and Albany having higher income-to-house price ratios than Perth⁴.

Consequently, there will be enduring demand for social housing and a need to maintain proactive engagement with the Commonwealth Government, including on discount-to-market-rent initiatives. Programs like shared equity (where government co-owns a percentage of the home) and Keystart (low deposit home loans) remain an essential part of the response – especially for modest income families and people in regional areas where Keystart can often be the primary mortgage lender.

³ Figures are based on Perth metropolitan data only as regional data is dispersed and more variable.

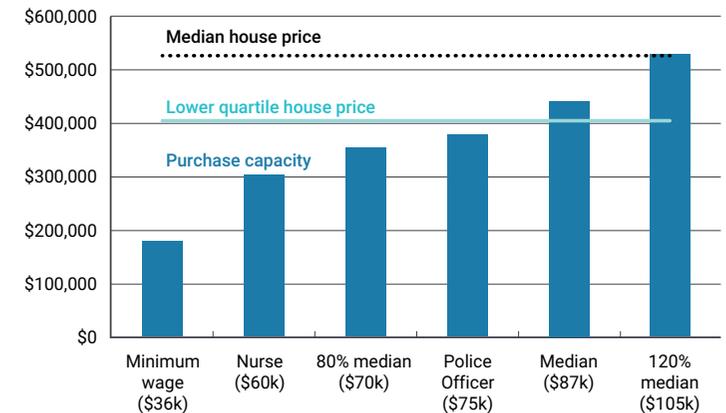
⁴ Housing Industry Forecasting Group 2017-2018, pg 27.

Figure 3: shows what people can afford to spend on rent and the percentage of rentals that are available and affordable to them.



Source: Department of Communities, Department of Commerce Bonds data. NOTE: People on very low incomes may also receive Commonwealth Rent Assistance which would modestly increase what they can afford.

Figure 4: shows how unaffordable it can be for many people to buy a home⁵.

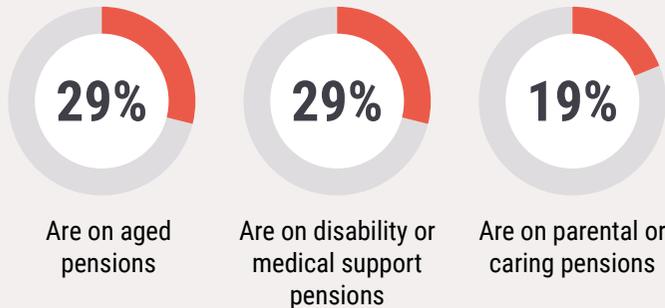


Sources: Department of Communities, REIWA.

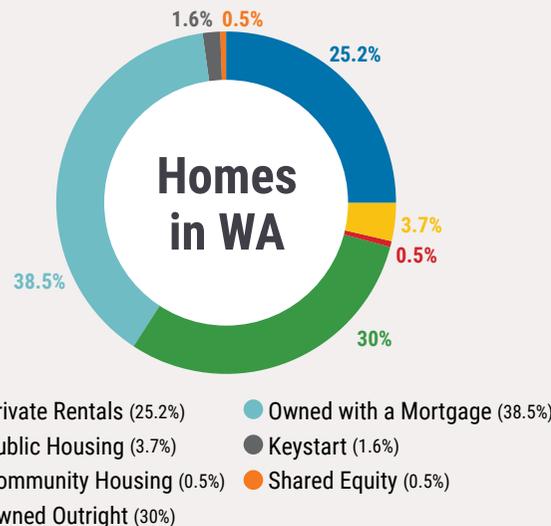
⁵ Figure 4 shows house prices only. As at December 2017 the median unit price was the same as the lower quartile house price.

Quick Facts:

Social Housing tenant main income types



On average WA builds **22,000** homes a year mostly detached houses



Dwelling construction was worth **\$9.2 billion** to the WA economy in 2016-17

14,000 Households on the Social Housing Waitlist

1,320 are on the **priority waitlist**

1.07m homes in WA and **43,000** social homes

1 in 25



Sources: Department of Communities; ABS Census 2016; REIWA; Fair Work Commission; ABS 5220, 6345; Housing Industry Forecasting Group.

Note: all numbers are approximate. The ABS defines a person as homeless if their dwelling is inadequate; or has no tenure or a short tenure that can't be extended; or does not allow them control of, or access to, space for social relations.



2. Goals

Our Plan centres on three inter-connected goals:

1. using housing to help achieve better outcomes for individuals and families in need;
2. delivering inclusive and connected communities, where people of all incomes and backgrounds have a place to call home and to belong; and
3. creating a housing system that is more responsive to current and future need.

The following sections provide a little more detail on what these things mean to us.

Better outcomes for individuals and families

Housing that is affordable, regardless of income, is a foundation for opportunity. Secure, well-located and affordable housing gives people the base they need not just to survive, but thrive. It is extremely hard to maintain connection to school, employment and friends, and participate in the social and economic life of the community if you don't have a stable place to live. As the lead agency for the Plan, the Department of Communities' ultimate endeavour is to enable

pathways to individual, family and community wellbeing. This can only be achieved if the pathway includes an affordable, appropriate and safe place to live, with the understanding that different people may need different levels of support at different times in their life.

For some people this might be as simple as a bond assistance loan to help them secure a private rental. Others may need more support, like that offered in transitional housing and rental brokerage initiatives, which provide wrap around services and life skills, as well as a home.

The actions in this Plan will help preserve the dream of home ownership for low to moderate income working families through Keystart's low deposit home loans and shared home ownership options with the Department of Communities. Exploring further options to expand our affordable rental sector beyond just social housing will benefit the growing numbers of people who need secure, subsidised market-rentals. Most importantly, the Plan will maintain a social housing safety net for those Western Australians who need it. This may be for a short while to help people get through difficult periods, or longer term for people with no other viable options.





Inclusive and connected communities

It is estimated that WA will grow to 4.6 million people by 2050, requiring an additional million homes to cater for the estimated 3.5 million people in the metropolitan area and the 1.1 million people calling our regions home⁶. They will include people of all ages, life experiences and household compositions, require a wide range of housing types and want to live in places with easy connectivity to family, friends, jobs, schools and other amenities. If we don't design for this diversity, the people who are the backbone of our communities and local economies will be excluded. This might include the people who make our morning coffee, teach our children, staff our supermarkets, support our vulnerable citizens and our vulnerable citizens themselves. Already we have older suburbs that have seen a loss of young people and the economic and social vibrancy they bring, along with the family disconnection that occurs when adult children can't afford to live near their parents.

Diversity not only supports and enhances our communities now, it ensures their longevity and future growth. Government initiatives like METRONET will facilitate a more compact and connected city and provide a range of transit-aligned housing, jobs and services. Master planned precincts around METRONET

stations will drive changes across more than 5,000 hectares of Perth, creating connected community centres within walking distance of stations. State Planning Policy will maintain a focus on delivering diverse housing types and tenures where all members of our community can live, work and play. And government-led developments, including within METRONET precincts, will focus on opportunities for people on low to moderate incomes, as well as liveable design standard homes.



6 Western Australia Tomorrow (2015), Population Report No. 9, Long Term Population Forecasts for Western Australia, medium series; Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million



Responsive housing system

Government leadership and investment is critical, but delivering the range of options needed across the housing continuum is not something that any one sector can successfully achieve on its own. Continuing partnerships with the private and not-for-profit sectors are required to harness each player’s unique capabilities and help enable people to achieve their housing goals.

Our Plan contains a comprehensive set of actions to improve the responsiveness of the housing system, and broaden pathways for people on low to moderate incomes. It will encourage the consideration of real affordability at the planning, development and construction stages, renew and reinterpret under-used housing types to expand choice, and actively



share knowledge, data and innovations to support the delivery of inclusive communities.

While increasing overall supply and the efficiency of the planning and approvals system remains an important part of the solution, it needs to be the right kind of supply, in the right locations, at the right time. The actions in this Plan will support broader government policy as reflected in 'Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million' and regional development priorities, as well as consumer needs and choices⁷.

Taking steps to address the mismatch between dwelling size, household size, and current and future need is a key focus of state planning policies and this



Plan. As Figure 5 shows, large dwellings make up nearly 80% of homes in WA, while large households make up only 24% of the population. By contrast households of two to three people make up half of WA’s population, but only 14% of our dwellings are medium sized. In part, this mismatch leads to land and housing being underused.⁸

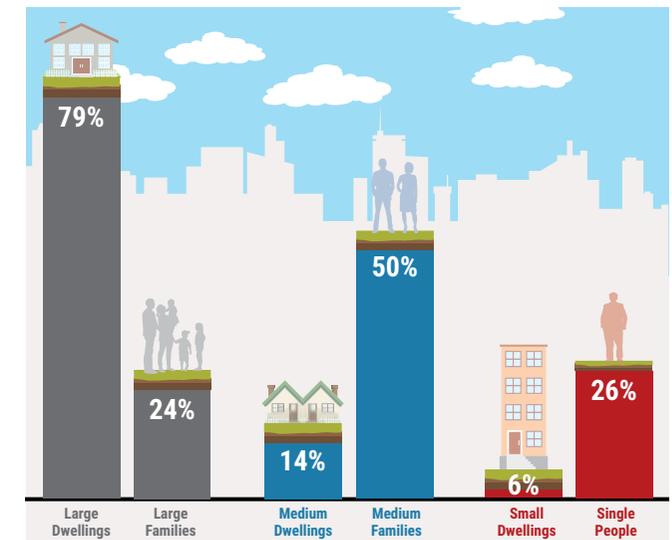


Figure 5: Shows the mismatch between family size and the relative size of homes in Western Australia⁹.

⁷ The Housing We’d Choose: a study for Perth and Peel 2013 suggests the balance of new supply needs to shift from the existing pattern of 80% separate houses to a more even spread of around 56% separate houses, 35% semi-detached and 9% apartments.

⁸ Census of Population and Housing, ABS, 2016.

⁹ Dwelling size is defined as: Large (separate houses); Medium (semi-detached) and Small (Flats/Units). (Dwelling size is a good approximate for bedroom number, where small, medium and large dwellings exist in approximately the same proportion as dwellings with one, two and three or more bedrooms.) Household size is defined as: Large (A household with 4 or more people in usual residence); Medium (A household with 2 or 3); Small (lone person households). Data Source: Census of Housing and Population, ABS, 2016.



Innovations and Breakthroughs

Innovations that increase choice and diversity across our vast state will be a strong focus of our Plan, and are needed now more than ever. With partners, we will continue to push the boundaries of what's possible and build on what we've already learnt. For example:

- developments such as the nationally awarded One on Aberdeen apartment project in Northbridge have demonstrated how government land can be used to deliver a truly inclusive mixed-income development at no cash cost to government;
- the recent launch of Western Australia's first homes on sub-100 sqm blocks in the Ellenbrook town centre is an example of the planning, development and building sectors coming together to challenge what high quality, transport-aligned, affordable living options can mean in a Western Australian context;
- our work with Aboriginal people and Aboriginal-led organisations in regional WA under initiatives like Transitional Housing and Move to Town are increasing the access Aboriginal people have to improved housing amenity, education, training and employment, and ultimately home ownership opportunities; and
- leveraging government land, infrastructure and private sector capital to create truly inclusive developments.





Innovations and Breakthroughs

Serina at One on Aberdeen

Serina's battle with a medical condition left her unable to work and in need of constant treatment. Things started to look up when she was offered a social housing unit at One on Aberdeen, which was well-located close to the hospital where she received treatment. "Having this apartment has impacted my life in the most positive of ways," Serina said. "I feel safe and I feel that I belong."



Ellenbrook microlots

High quality, affordable two-bed, two-bathroom homes on a green title lot less than 100 sqm, all within walking distance of shops, restaurants and the future Ellenbrook train station.



Evelyn & Transitional Housing

In less than two years, single mum Evelyn became a homeowner through the East Kimberley Transitional Housing Program. "It was a really big step to take and quite a journey" Evelyn said. "But I am so happy to finally have a place to call my own."



Foyer Oxford partnership

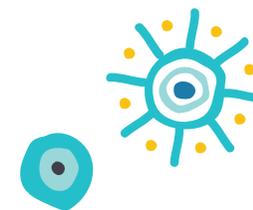
A multi-sector collaboration involving not-for-profit organisations, the private sector and State Government agencies, to provide integrated studio apartments in Leederville, with holistic support for young people in need.



METRONET precincts

The Housing and Jobs package will deliver an additional 1,390 transit-aligned homes over four years, including 320 social housing opportunities, 400 homes at entry level prices and up to 300 with liveable design features.





3. Focus areas

Led by the Department of Communities and backed by across-government effort, the Plan is a statewide approach spanning individual, community and system-wide outcomes.

It reflects a strong focus on:

- integrating housing and human services delivery for people with complex needs;
- using access to housing as an enabler for broader life outcomes;
- optimising social as well as financial outcomes from land use decisions;
- delivering more diverse and inclusive developments;
- partnering to secure private sector expertise and capital;
- pursuing planning and regulatory reforms that will reduce development time and costs; and
- influencing other areas of government (e.g. Commonwealth policies and programs).

The importance of affordable housing goes beyond the difference it makes to individuals and families. Research continues to show that affordable housing is essential to an inclusive and well-functioning community, as well as a productive economy.





As such, our Plan's **focus areas** span the breadth of our roles – from regulator, to policy maker, catalyst, enabler, partner, and social funder.

1 Transform the service delivery system to enable more people and place centred outcomes

2 Support vulnerable Western Australians – including with earlier and more coordinated support

3 More options and pathways across the housing continuum to help people reach their housing goals

4 Broaden sources of capital to augment government investment

5 Reform the planning and approvals system to support diverse, affordable, accessible and safe communities

6 Increase housing diversity and adaptability to meet current and future housing needs

7 Leverage METRONET precincts and government roles for social and affordable housing outcomes

8 Create new and renewed communities that are inclusive, affordable and transformative.





4. Principles

The deep connections between People, Place and Home capture the essence of our Plan and guide its goals, focus areas and actions.

People

This reflects the Plan's person-centred approach across the range of groups we aim to assist. Secure and affordable housing provides an essential foundation for individual and family stability, resilience and connection to community. It helps us be the best we can be and to live a meaningful life. Our housing needs vary at different stages in our lives, and responses must be broader and more flexible to match these needs.



Place

Place is where we feel connected to the world around us and reflects how we belong physically, socially and culturally. Healthy and well-functioning communities enable us to play roles in social, economic and cultural life and provide positive spaces and places for us to live, work and play. Diversity, inclusion and liveability are cornerstones of fair and prosperous communities.



Home

This reflects who lives in the home as much as the home they live in, which is so much more than just bricks and mortar. Home is different for everyone, but it should always have a few things in common. It should be safe. It should be functional. It should be affordable. And it should provide a sense of security – both physically and emotionally.



First life, then spaces, then buildings: the other way round never works.

Architect Jan Gehl



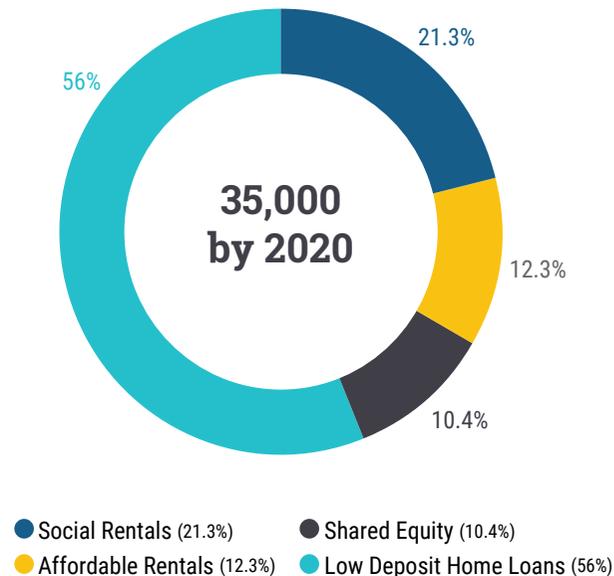


5. A new target for 2020

The McGowan Government has increased the previous government’s target of 30,000 additional homes for people on low to moderate incomes (2010-2020), to 35,000 homes. The additional 7,700 homes to be delivered under this plan will assist more than 15,000 people and provide a significant boost to low income earners and the WA economy¹⁰. Over 1,800 of the additional homes will be in regional areas.

Importantly, this Plan isn’t just about a supply target. It includes broadening trials of transitional and affordable rental models (which sit between social housing and private rental housing on the housing continuum) and continuing to work proactively with the Commonwealth Government on further discount-to-market rent initiatives. It also includes actions regarding future Commonwealth-State agreements for social housing and remote housing for Aboriginal people. These areas of shared responsibility are fundamental to providing the social safety net that Western Australians deserve and expect, as well as real pathways to other opportunities.

Figure 6: Breakdown of the 35,000 homes (2010-2020) by tenure type.



¹⁰ The majority of growth comes through Keystart low deposit home loans. The dominance of home ownership outcomes is not a policy choice but a budget reality. People on low to moderate incomes can be assisted with home loans at essentially no cost to the taxpayer, or impact on State net debt. In contrast, social housing for people with very low incomes requires both capital expenditure and very deep operating subsidies, which the State is not in a position to, and the Commonwealth is unwilling to, expand funding for at this time.





6. Key highlights

The Affordable Housing Action Plan confirms the McGowan Government's commitment to inclusive, diverse and affordable places to live. It delivers real benefits over the next three years as well as laying a path to a new Strategy by 2020. Highlights include:

For people

- Over 7,700 homes for people on low to moderate incomes, including over 500 additional social rental homes, expanded crisis accommodation to support our most vulnerable Western Australians and additional shared equity and low deposit home loans for aspiring low to moderate income homebuyers
- Better integration of housing and support services for people with high or complex needs
- Greater choice and diversity across the housing market, particularly in existing urban areas.

For communities

- Inclusion of social and affordable housing in major developments and METRONET precincts
- Land and housing development that supports a steady supply of entry-level homes
- Continued investment in 43,000 social rental homes and over \$4bn in borrowings for Keystart home loans.

For the economy

- New construction that supports \$2.3bn in economic activity and almost 6,000 jobs
- A \$394m METRONET Housing and Jobs package
- Partnered developments that secure private sector capital and expertise
- Reduction in demand for other high-cost services¹¹.

¹¹ E.g.(Wood, Flatau, Zaretsky, Foster, Vallesi and Miscenko, 2016). Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute. What are the health, social and economic benefits of providing public housing and support to formerly homeless people?. (Kerman, Sylvestre, Aubry and Distasio, 2018). BMC Health Services Research, (18): 190. The effects of housing stability on service use among homeless adults with mental illness in a randomized controlled trial of housing first. (Maclennan, Crommelin, van den Nouweland and Randolph, 2018). City Futures Research Centre, UNSW Built Environment. Making better economic cases for housing policies.



7. Questions and answers

What's different about this Plan?

In line with the McGowan Government's priorities and machinery of government changes, this Plan takes a broad focus on people and communities, not just the bricks and mortar they live in. The principles of people, place and home drive the directions contained in the Plan beyond the government's traditional role of social landlord.

Why only a three year plan?

The Plan will lay a foundation for a new and more expansive Strategy to be launched in 2020. Along with delivering on the actions included in the Plan, we will use this time to try new approaches, and work with partners in the private and not-for-profit sectors to develop the new Strategy.

Why is there more focus on home ownership than social housing?

Home loans can be delivered in a cost-neutral manner without additional cost to taxpayers and impact on State net debt. In contrast, social housing requires significant funding to build/purchase as well as to operate because of the difference between what people can pay in rent and what it costs to deliver.

How will this help people with an urgent need for housing, such as those escaping family and domestic violence or who are homeless?

As part of this Plan, the government is investing over \$150m in social housing and expansion to crisis

accommodation, along with targeted initiatives for people currently in, or waiting for, social housing. We acknowledge this is not all that's needed – but it is what's possible in the current financial environment.

The \$150m includes \$20.5m to assist people dealing with family violence, homelessness and drug and alcohol issues. This incorporates our election commitment to deliver two additional women's refuges to strengthen service responses and ensure women and children can access appropriate services.

In addition, a key partner document to the Plan will be the 10 Year State Homelessness Strategy, which is currently in development and will examine innovative approaches to ending the cycle of homelessness.

What about the regions?

The Plan has a statewide and whole of housing continuum focus which will benefit regional communities. Actions to support better outcomes in the regions include the fundamental reform of local housing and support services through the Department of Communities, beginning in the Kimberley. Further actions include the progression of urban renewal projects in Albany and Bunbury, a boost for social housing, and additional crisis accommodation in ten regional towns. Building on the work of the Regional Services Reform Unit, the Plan includes a specific focus on working with Aboriginal people and corporations to improve employment, education and life outcomes through access to housing.

Over 1,800 of the 7,700 additional homes under this plan will be in regional areas.

Where do I get more information?

You can download an easy read format of the Plan, find your local regional office, and read more about the types of housing assistance that may be relevant to you by following the Housing link on our website (as below).

If you would like further information please contact the Department of Communities;

189 Royal Street, East Perth WA 6004

PO Address: PO Box 6334, East Perth WA 6892

Telephone: 08 6217 6888

Country free call: 1800 176 888

Email: enquiries@communities.wa.gov.au

Website: www.communities.wa.gov.au

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) –

Telephone: 13 14 50

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service. For more information visit: www.relayservice.gov.au

This publication is available in other formats that can be requested at any time.

8. Actions 2017/18 to 2019/20

Focus Area 1: Transform the service delivery system to deliver more people and place centred outcomes		
Direction	Action	Lead Agency
Reorient service delivery to better integrate housing and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencing in the Kimberley, work with partners to fundamentally reform local service responses and outcomes, including via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> integrated regional teams that include holistic service coordination and specialist expertise as required place-based services which are designed, commissioned and delivered according to local need across sector partnerships that facilitate coordinated housing and support responses Develop new strategies for Early Years, Youth, Age-Friendly Communities, Family and Domestic Violence and the Youth Justice 'Target 120' initiative to drive more integrated outcomes Develop a Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Accommodation and Support Strategy 2018-2025, to guide stakeholders in the development of appropriate accommodation and support 	Communities
Utilise housing as an enabler for other life-changing outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Aboriginal people and partners in regional and remote areas to diversify housing opportunities across the continuum Through the North West Aboriginal Housing Fund and other initiatives, expand access to housing to influence employment, education and wellbeing outcomes as a pathway to economic empowerment Finalise a Seniors Housing Strategy to help ensure that seniors on low to moderate incomes can access an expanded range of housing options 	Communities
Reform social housing to maximise independence and transition opportunities while retaining a safety net for those with enduring need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a needs-based system in place of the current waitlist to respond more effectively to individual need and circumstance Continue to redesign social housing policy and practice to reflect 'duration of need' assistance, rather than a lifelong entitlement Revise eligibility settings to enable consideration of personal and housing market circumstances as well as household income 	Communities
Make it easier for new and existing clients to interact with Government and make informed choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer more services online, including social housing and bond loan applications Implement automatic rent deductions to help reduce evictions for non-payment of rent In conjunction with consumer bodies, revamp the affordable housing online portal (<i>affordable.housing.wa.gov.au</i>) to improve access to information and advice for people looking for affordable housing options 	Communities
Capitalise on the capacity and strength of the community sector through value-adding partnering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in projects and partnerships that complement and/or improve outcomes through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proactively collaborating in the design and delivery of services supporting the role of the community housing sector in diversifying housing options and providing an alternative to public housing 	Communities

Focus Area 2: Support vulnerable Western Australians – including with earlier and more coordinated support

Direction	Action	Lead Agency
Maximise the sustainability and potency of the social housing system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain investment in over 43,000 social housing rentals • Deliver a further 534 homes to assist more than 1,000 people with urgent need • Subsidise public housing rents by an average of \$300m p.a. to ensure they remain affordable • Create additional opportunities for new tenants through reducing under-occupancy, managing vacancies and assisting people with capacity to transition to other options • Secure ongoing Commonwealth policy and funding commitment under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement 	Communities and Community Housing sector
Earlier and more connected support for people with high or complex needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a new tenancy support program ('Thrive'), which will offer proactive assistance and tailored support to incoming and existing tenants by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – providing more information upfront to help new tenants understand their responsibilities – assisting priority applicants to address potential barriers to a sustainable tenancy – referring existing households to tenancy support services to help address issues that are jeopardising their tenancy 	Communities
Increase options for people in crisis and reduce periods of homelessness or hospitalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest \$20.5m capital for new and refurbished crisis accommodation facilities for people dealing with family violence, homelessness and drug and/or alcohol issues, including two new women's refuges • Enable public housing tenants experiencing family and domestic violence to transfer their lease into the victim's name, providing the opportunity to remain in their current home • Expand crisis accommodation in Collie through the refurbishment of Department of Communities properties • Following successful projects in Joondalup and Rockingham, commence construction of mental health 'step-up step-down' facilities in Broome, Karratha and Bunbury, to help prevent the need for hospital admission and support people after discharge • Collaborate and co-design a State Homelessness Strategy with the sector to drive more integrated outcomes and creative responses to accommodation, support and outreach needs 	Communities Communities, Mental Health Commission Communities



Focus Area 3: More options and pathways across the continuum to help people reach their housing goals

Direction	Action	Lead Agency
Trial initiatives that build personal capacity and provide viable pathways and transitions from social housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lease more homes from private landlords as an alternative to social housing for people with time-limited need, and to take advantage of favourable market conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – expand the Assisted Private Rental Trial to assist a further 100 social housing applicants and tenants to transition to independence in the private rental sector – undertake a mid-term review of the Trial and prepare future options for government consideration • Assist up to 100 tenants to transition from social housing to home ownership through a targeted shared equity home ownership scheme • Develop new opportunities with Aboriginal people in the regions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – innovative models that leverage government, Aboriginal corporation and social impact capital via the Northwest Aboriginal Housing Fund – investigating a targeted Indigenous Home Ownership Subsidy Scheme to assist regionally based government employees to purchase homes – mandatory targets in housing capital works tenders in the State’s North to support apprenticeships and employment – implementing an Aboriginal Regional Employment Strategy within the Department of Communities to strengthen employment and business opportunities – as part of the South-West Native Title Settlement, contribute to the Noongar Community and Economic Participation Frameworks and transfer 121 properties to the Noongar Boodja Trust 	Communities
Pursue actions to create secure, affordable rental options in the market for people on low incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Commonwealth on implementation of the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation to help finance affordable rental housing through the community housing sector • Identify workable models to help bridge the gap between social housing and market rentals • Provide bond assistance loans to an estimated 39,000 households • As part of the Review of the <i>Residential Tenancies Act (1987)</i> investigate optional standard long term lease agreements for landlords and tenants wishing to enter into longer arrangements 	Communities Communities & Dept of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety
Continue to responsibly support home ownership opportunities for low to moderate income households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support Keystart low deposit home loans with over \$4billion in borrowings, 25% of which supports regional homeowners • Finance nearly 6,000 additional Keystart low deposit home loans – predominantly for first homebuyers • In addition, provide over 1,000 shared equity opportunities for people on low incomes • Encourage and enable existing shared equity clients to purchase more equity in their homes – thereby freeing up funding for re-investment in affordable housing initiatives 	Communities



Focus Area 4: Broaden sources of capital to augment government investment

Direction	Action	Lead Agency
Mobilise broader sources of finance to help create and retain more affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress opportunities to harness different combinations of public and private capital via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – bond markets through the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHIFC) – federal infrastructure finance through the NHIFC and other sources – taxation, superannuation and other incentives that support private participation in affordable housing outcomes 	Communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue alternative funding mechanisms to help support sustainable new lending for Keystart low deposit home loans 	Treasury
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate social impact investment approaches for specific outcomes and target groups 	Communities
Leverage government assets to attract private finance to help fund affordable housing outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure private capital through Department of Communities' land and housing joint ventures and partnered projects Deliver the final 122 homes (of 552 over 10 years) from the transfer and leasing of public housing stock under the \$600m asset transfer program to Community Housing providers 	Communities Community Housing Sector

Focus Area 5: Reform the planning and approvals system to support diverse, affordable, accessible and safe communities

Direction	Action	Lead Agency
Utilise the planning system to support innovation in housing diversity and affordability outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a Housing Advisory Unit within the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage to inform major planning policies and decisions and collaboratively pursue transformative reforms 	Department of Planning, Lands, Heritage (DPLH) & Communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement strata reforms, including introduction of new forms of tenure to facilitate mixed-use development, housing choice and infrastructure cost sharing 	Landgate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek early input from the Department of Communities on major planning strategies or policies 	DPLH/WAPC
Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning system to better meet community needs and help reduce housing costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a reform roadmap that will cut red tape and ensure a more transparent, fairer and consistent planning system 	Planning Reform Team (DPLH)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify options to ensure consistency of Local Government Strategies and Policies with State Planning Strategy and Policies 	DPLH
Implement market enabling policies and initiatives to support inclusion and affordability outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a toolkit to assist local governments to promote and incentivise affordable housing in their local areas 	Housing Advisory Unit
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of Design WA Stage Two, introduce fit-for-purpose planning codes for medium density development to increase the supply, diversity and quality of the 'missing middle' 	DPLH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain and augment the existing Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority (MRA) Planning Policy 'Affordable and Diverse Housing' – which requires a minimum of 12% affordable housing in residential or mixed use developments under its planning control 	MRA/Landcorp and Communities

Focus Area 6: Increase housing diversity and adaptability to meet current and future housing needs

Direction	Action	Lead Agency
Enable renewal and repurposing of WA housing stock to release spare capacity and enable 'second life' adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options to enable the repurposing of large homes and/or underutilised buildings for additional housing Undertake a demonstration project to convert existing large homes into dual occupancy homes, and share learnings with stakeholders and industry 	Housing Advisory Unit Communities
Renew and reposition the social housing portfolio to better meet current and future needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refurbish 100 social housing dwellings to extend their useful life Replace 100 larger homes more with 1-2 bedroom homes to better align to applicant needs Facilitate 500 transfers of small households from large to smaller homes to help free up capacity to assist more people 	Communities
Increase the proportion of newly constructed homes with liveable design features to better meet the needs of the community, including seniors and people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent with the 'National Disability Strategy 2010-2020' and the 'WA Liveable Homes Initiative', incorporate essential design features into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> new social housing development where practical; and at least 20% of newly constructed dwellings via the Department of Communities Develop and agree minimum whole of government essential liveable design standards for adoption in government policies and developments 	Communities DPLH and DMIRS (with MRA, Landcorp Communities, Peak Bodies)
Reintroduce contemporary interpretations of old housing types that have left gaps in the housing continuum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and pilot the use of ancillary dwellings (e.g. 'granny flats') for social housing purposes Progress leasehold models, including through a modular park home living project on government land in Ascot targeted to seniors living Pursue innovative ideas to reinvigorate under-used housing types that would increase choice and assist more people on low incomes (e.g. shared facility accommodation, micro homes, park homes, laneway housing, garage apartments, granny flats etc) 	Communities



Focus Area 7: Leverage METRONET precincts and government roles for social and affordable housing outcomes

Direction	Action	Lead Agency
Generate vibrant, diverse and inclusive METRONET precincts that include options for low and moderate income earners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include opportunities for social and affordable housing as part of METRONET precincts • With private sector partners, invest \$394m in a Housing and Jobs package which will deliver 1,390 new medium density homes over four years including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 320 additional homes for social housing (77 in the period of this Plan) – 400 entry level affordable homes – up to 300 with universal design features 	DPLH, MRA, Communities Communities
Develop and share affordability data and information to support market efficiency and evidence based decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an online portal which includes place-based affordable housing indicators, forecasts, information and tools to assist planners, developers, consumers and decision makers • In collaboration with industry bodies and government agencies, continue to support the production of credible, consensus based forecasts via the Housing Industry Forecasting Group 	Communities
Optimise policy outcomes from targeted application of taxes, charges and grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate opportunities to apply Commonwealth and/or State duties, taxes and grants differently to incentivise development and support housing supply and affordability outcomes in key locations 	Treasury (with Communities)
Optimise policy outcomes from government land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain a proactive role in efficiently leveraging government land holdings to help ensure housing diversity and social and economic inclusion, including via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the redevelopment of surplus government land such as former school sites – streamlining and scaling up government procurement for private sector involvement – investigating the use of non-permanent accommodation on high amenity reserved or vacant land 	Communities



Focus Area 8: Create new and renewed communities that are inclusive, affordable and transformative

Direction	Action	Lead Agency
Undertake urban renewal and development that has a transformative social and economic impact on local areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a state-wide Urban Renewal Plan to prioritise investment and revitalisation in local communities • Commence major development projects in partnership with the private sector in Joondalup, Cannington, Beaconsfield and Bentley that will ultimately deliver more than 5,000 new medium and high density homes • Continue to plan and develop regional renewal projects such as Withers in Bunbury and Spencer Park in Albany in collaboration with local communities • Deliver increased diversity, choice and affordability in middle ring suburbs, including via partnered developments in Greenwood, Girrawheen and Ferndale 	Communities
Create inclusive, vibrant and sustainable new communities that include homes for people on low incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence work to establish significant new communities on government land in Brabham, Yanchep and Treeby in partnership with the private sector • Continue the development of major communities such as Banksia Grove, Byford, Brighton, Dalyellup, Ellenbrook, Golden Bay, Harrisdale, Albany, Geraldton, Hilbert and Wellard in partnership with the private sector 	Communities
Deliver land and housing that supports a steady supply of entry level homes and right-sizing options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver over 4,000 new lots across more than 20 local government areas, with 80% sold below the median land price and 30% in the lowest quartile • Deliver an additional 2,400 new homes with 80% sold below the median house price and 30% in the lowest quartile 	Communities
Actively develop and share innovations that deliver breakthroughs in affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with industry to trial new solutions and approaches to land use, infrastructure, place-making, housing design, construction, tenure, financing, partnering, and/or environmental efficiency. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – instigate a place management approach as part of the Bentley precinct development to activate ongoing economic and social opportunity – achieve development approvals for WA's first timber framed apartments – deliver the first micro-lot (sub 100sqm) homes to the WA market as part of the Ellenbrook joint venture – introduce dual-key housing designs to support multi-generational living – trial the use of power-sharing and storage to reduce the cost of living in multi-unit developments – undertake a feasibility study in partnership with Curtin University to assess the viability of renewable energy technology in remote communities – promote water efficient practices and harness technology to support public housing tenants to save water and reduce their water bills – demonstrate water efficiency outcomes in new Department of Communities land development projects in cooperation with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Water Corporation and the Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities 	Communities



9. What the Affordable Housing Action Plan means for our Regions

The McGowan Government recognises that secure and affordable housing provides an essential foundation for individual and family stability, resilience and connection to community, and that’s true whether you live in Kununurra, Esperance or anywhere else across Western Australia. Accordingly, our Affordable Housing Action Plan has a statewide focus that will benefit regional communities, as well as metropolitan areas.

Beginning in the Kimberley, our Plan will reform the delivery of housing and support services through the Department of Communities. It will also progress renewal and development projects in major centres, deliver a boost for social housing, crisis accommodation and Keystart home loans across the State, and work with Aboriginal people to improve employment, education and life outcomes through access to housing. Almost a quarter (over 1,800 of 7,700) of the additional homes to be delivered under our Plan will be in regional areas. Some of the specific actions that will benefit people in regional communities are summarised below.

People

- Commencing in the Kimberley, implement integrated regional teams and place-based services designed and delivered according to local needs
- Through the North West Aboriginal Housing Fund and transitional housing initiatives, use access to housing to promote employment, education and general wellbeing outcomes
- Invest \$20.5m capital for new and refurbished crisis accommodation for people dealing with family violence, homelessness and drug and/or alcohol issues, including in Collie and nine other regional towns
- Commence construction of mental health ‘step-up step-down’ facilities in Broome, Karratha and Bunbury, to help prevent the need for hospital admission and to support people after discharge.



Place

- Develop a statewide Urban Renewal Plan, while continuing to plan and develop regional renewal projects in Bunbury and in Albany
- Continue major land and housing developments in Dalyellup, Albany and Geraldton in partnership with the private sector
- As part of the South-West Native Title Settlement, contribute to the Noongar Community and Economic Participation Frameworks and transfer 121 properties to the Noongar Boodja Trust.



Home

- Support Keystart low deposit home loans with over \$4billion in State borrowings, 25% of which flows to regional home buyers
- Finance nearly 6,000 additional Keystart low deposit home loans statewide
- Investigate a targeted Home Ownership Subsidy Scheme to assist regionally based Aboriginal government employees to purchase homes
- Undertake a feasibility study in partnership with Curtin University to assess the viability of renewable energy technology in remote communities.





Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

People, Place, Home