

Greetings

I am making a personal submission to the productivity commission National Housing and Agreement Review

My name is Darren McGhee. I have experienced homelessness and worked in the homelessness sector for over 23 years in various position with a number of reputed agencies who have received funding under the NHHA. I have worked directly with people who have assorted homelessness and housing experience and witnessed firsthand the pain and anguish of peoples suffering.

We should not forget that the NHHA provides hope for many community members that are struggling and that data statistics are real lives and people

I would like to comment on the following areas of the submission.

The current purpose of the NHHA is clear but not direct in language and I believe that the appropriateness of the agreement is not reasonable for our times, given the urgency of housing need and the increasing experience of homelessness in the Australian community. I make the following recommendations

1. The NHHA needs to be aligned and/or incorporate a long-term National Housing and Homelessness Plan that should give structure to the agreement. It has hard to understand why “The Road Home” the only National Homelessness plan which was well received and contributed to by local communities was not followed up and used as a basis for the last NHHA.

I am not alone in calling for a long-term National Homelessness Plan. This position is shared by submissions and briefs to the [House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs](#)

*‘While the states and territories are responsible for housing and homelessness, a clear and consistent message to the Committee was that there is a need for a national approach. A national strategy would lead to better coordination, more accountability and a stronger focus on the policies that work—prevention and early intervention, providing housing as a priority, and encouraging more investment in social and affordable housing.’*

[Media release 4/08/2021](#)

3. The NHHA needs to have more direct language and be held accountable to clear common objectives that reflects an understanding of the suffering in the community. The NHHA should commit to Ending Homelessness as homelessness is a horrid experience that shortens life spans, leads to a serious decline of mental and health conditions, puts our children at risk to many traumas when we should be ensuring a safe and healthy environment.

4. The NHHA should be more person centred and reflect a greater depth of understanding of the diversity of people seeking housing, shelter, and their support needs. The right house for the right people/s. Culture, age, gender, disability, family demographics and housing that understands the housing and support needs of the people/s being housed

5. The NHHA should have a greater focus on ensuring local communities have housing and homelessness systems that work. Regional areas often do not have a housing and homelessness system but fragmented services. The lack of housing and homelessness system mapping and local communities’ data severely compromises the effectiveness of the NHHA to meet its objectives. It puts into question are the resources going to where it is most needed and how do we know this if we do not have the evidence. [The Australian Alliance to End Homelessness](#) Advance to Zero methodology is one example of new point in time data driving responses to ending homelessness. The data evidence has been used to advocate for systemic improvements and enables improved planning, coordination, and alignment of needs to resources.

Thanks for the submission opportunity

Regards

Darren McGhee