

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

Tenant's Consultative Group

Date of consultation:	21 July 2017
Group consulted with:	Tenant's Consultative Group (TCG)
Number of attendees:	16
Name of organisations:	Not applicable

Key themes arising from the consultation

- Focus on low income earners was well supported and participants offered innovative ideas across all four goals.
- There needs to be flexibility and an individualised approach to services and support – meet the greatest need first and don't try to fit people into a slot in the system.
- Focus on prevention rather than crisis – there should more support that helps tenants participate in employment, education and training, as well as supporting people who have mental or physical health issues. But be careful not to make people dependent – empower them.
- Better and more consistent communication of information from government – better use of technology, putting forms online, making it accessible.
- Need more rent to buy/shared equity/fund/community housing to help people buy their own home.

Key quotes

Increasing affordable rental:

- “Rental subsidies are a good idea. I fled Brisbane due to domestic violence and came to Canberra and lived in private rental first for 6 months, but I couldn't sustain it, and needed to come to public housing.”
- “Education and budgeting help has to accompany any rental subsidy, especially if the reason they need help is related to debt.”

Reducing homelessness:

- “Housing must come first because nothing else can be stable unless housing is stable first.”



Strengthening social housing:

- “Public housing renewal should continue - a good roof over your head leads to people getting jobs and improving their lives.”
- “Personal support plans could be a good mechanism to support tenants, especially in relation to childcare, childcare assistance would help me work full time and get a good income.”
- “We would like more choice and control over allocations and transfers in public housing, so we can be more empowered to make choices in all elements of housing.”
- “Currently, people are housed appropriately at the time of allocation in public housing, but there is no review. If they were housed more appropriately later in a place that better suited their needs that would be better. It might encourage them to buy their own house.”
- “If existing community housing organisations employed and trained up Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all areas of the organisation - that would work. That would help train a pool of staff and workers and raise the expertise of boards.”

Increasing affordable home ownership:

- “Someone working full-time on an average or slightly below average income, with children, should be able to buy their own home. It’s not right that this is no longer a possibility in the ACT.”

What is working well?

- Accommodation and wrap around support together
- Uniting Church in Curtin
- Caravan parks - cheapest way to rent in the ACT
- Rent assistance from Centrelink

What could be improved?

- Greater collaboration of services and supports for people in private rental.
- Need to focus on the gap between public housing and private rental. The gap is currently too big and this is where community housing could help bridge the gap.
- More support for people in the LGBTIQ community who are experiencing domestic violence (especially men)
- More support for multi-cultural communities
- More caravan parks or communal tiny house developments but work to remove the stigma of trailer trash
- Encourage private sector to work with the disability sector to develop more disability housing

New ideas

- Housing ACT outreach program to explain the support services available
- Budgeting class at college/school explaining rent and how to buy properties
- More information about what services and supports are available
- Accessible information
- Peer mentoring programs
- Rental support for people who don't fit the criteria for public housing.
- More advertising of financial literacy programs that 'match' what you save over a period.
- Create a home equity scheme for people renting property for more than 10 years
- Incentivise Public Private Partnerships to develop within complexes that include owner occupiers, regular renters and low income renters
- Amend the Residential Tenancies Act to deal with issue of tenure for private rental
- Create a partnership scheme with private landlords and the ACT Government to reduce the purchase cost of an investment property if it's rent the property below market rate.
- Look at changing the types of houses (tiny houses in a communal setting) to reduce the overall cost of developing for developers.
- Mixed use blocks.
- Expand the range of property types you can put on a block.