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Senate Standing Committees on Economics
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submitted via economics.sen@aph.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern

Senate Economics Legislation Committee Inquiry into National Housing and Homelessness Plan Bill

The Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) welcomes the Senate Economics Legislation Committee's Inquiry into the proposed National Housing and Homelessness Plan Bill. Australia is currently facing major housing affordability and supply challenges which are placing large numbers of people into housing stress, insecurity, and homelessness. While all levels of governments have taken significant action to address housing supply, affordability, and the delivery of social and affordable housing, more needs to be done to improve housing outcomes for Australians.

ASBEC is a collaborative forum of peak bodies in the Australian built environment, focused on sustainable, productive, and resilient buildings, communities, and cities. Our [membership](#)ⁱ consists of industry associations, professional bodies, academia, non-government organisations and government observers who are involved in the planning, design, delivery, and operation of our built environment. ASBEC has a longstanding focus on cities, infrastructure, and urban-scale policy to support a sustainable, liveable, and resilient built environment. We strongly believe that the built environment is key to ensuring communities are resilient to the health and wellbeing impacts of climate change.

In October 2023 ASBEC made a [submission](#)ⁱⁱ to the National Housing and Homelessness Plan consultation. At that time our feedback focussed on our collective expertise on the ways in which a sustainable, productive, and resilient built environment in Australia can influence positive housing outcomes. We spoke specifically to sections 3.6 *The importance of planning, zoning and development* and 3.7 *The impact of climate change and disasters on housing security, sustainability and health* of the Issues Paper and made a number of key recommendations on ways to improve the planning, design and construction of Australia's housing stock to ensure that Australians have sufficient, resilient and healthy homes, now and into the future.

In that submission we also noted the Australian Government's key role as deliverer of a National Housing and Homelessness Plan that acknowledges relevant state policies and programs to avoid duplication, while identifying gaps and setting out shared national policy objectives for the future. We agreed that what is needed is a national plan that will complement, rather than replace, existing jurisdictional plans.

We view the proposed legislation as an important mechanism to ensuring consistent policies that support the ambitions of a secure and sustainable housing future for all Australians and to ensure consistency of response and accountability for implementation. We agree with the proponents of this legislation that enshrining the Plan in law will enhance its standing and durability.

Legislating a National Housing and Homelessness Plan will provide more clarity about what the Plan is attempting to achieve and how it will be monitored and evaluated. Legislation will streamline and better coordinate Commonwealth housing policy development and delivery which is currently fragmented across



Treasury, the Department of Social Services, the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council and Housing Australia.

The proposed legislation would utilise the Commonwealth Government's constitutional authority on external affairs and follow a similar model to Canada which legislated its first ever National Housing Strategy in 2019. It will give effect to our international obligation, under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), signed by Australia in 1966, to ensure access to adequate housing as a human right.

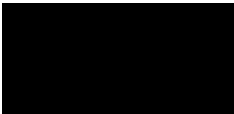
Under the legislation current and future governments would be required to develop, implement and maintain a 10-year National Housing and Homelessness Plan in line with legislated objectives, including improving housing supply, affordability and ending homelessness. **At its heart is the goal of ensuring everyone in Australia has an adequate home.**

The legislation will define the Plan's scope and ambition, as well as specifying the housing policy challenges it must address. It would create a framework in which to develop the detailed Plan with guidelines for genuine consultation, preserving the ability to negotiate with states and territories while increasing transparency, accountability and the Plan's standing and durability. The government of the day would be responsible for developing policies and programs under the Plan and reporting on progress.

ASBEC commends the Australian Government's commitment and work to date in developing the National Housing and Homelessness Plan. ASBEC appreciates the opportunity to continue to contribute to the development of the Plan and we support the adoption of the proposed legislation.

We remain committed to collaborating with the government and other stakeholders in further discussions and actions aimed at achieving sustainable and secure housing for all Australians. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me via [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely



Alison Scotland
Executive Director

ⁱ https://www.asbec.asn.au/membership/current_members/

ⁱⁱ <https://www.asbec.asn.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/231020-ASBEC-Housing-and-Homelessness-Plan-submission.pdf>