

Homeless Persons' Legal Service

Legal help for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness
A joint initiative of the Public Interest Law Clearing House Inc
and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre Ltd



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Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

24 October, 2008

Dear Committee Secretary,

Inquiry into National Rental Affordability Scheme Bill 2008

I am writing in response to the call for submissions into the National Rental Affordability Scheme Bill 2008.

The Homeless Persons Legal Service (**HPLS**) provides free legal advice and ongoing representation to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In addition to legal assistance, HPLS has a policy role, which involves identification of key issues that affect the clients and working with all levels of government and other relevant organisations in order to deliver better outcomes for people who are homeless.

The National Rental Affordability Scheme Bill 2008 attempts to encourage large-scale investment in housing by offering incentives to investors to supply affordable rental dwellings on the condition they are rented at 20 per cent below market rates. While this could result in increasing rental accommodation stock, HPLS believes that the impact of this scheme on the most vulnerable will be minimal as rents capped at 20 per cent below market rent will still be beyond the means of most individuals experiencing homelessness.

In order to ensure that those experiencing homelessness have their housing needs addressed, HPLS believes the National Rental Affordability Scheme should operate in conjunction with a massive injection of Federal funding into public housing under the National Affordable Housing Agreement. HPLS supports the recommendations of the National Affordable Housing Agreement Campaign that a growth target of 30,000 new public and non-profit dwellings should be included in the new National Affordable Housing Agreement.



For the Committee's information, HPLS also attaches the thoughts of over 150 homeless people as to how to solve their housing needs. These comments were obtained by HPLS in preparing for its Green Paper submission and have been attached, uncensored, to this submission.

Should you have any questions about HPLS's comments please feel free to contact me on (02) 8898 6510.

Yours Sincerely,

Chris Hartley
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