

Queensland Housing Supply Expert Panel Communique

Friday 15 March 2024 – Meeting #5

Meeting Purpose

The Queensland Housing Supply Expert Panel (the Panel) met formally for the fifth time in March 2024.

Following the launch of *Homes for Queenslanders* in February 2024, the Hon. Meaghan Scanlon, Minister for Housing, Local Government, Planning and Minister for Public Works and the Housing Delivery Board joined the Panel to discuss the plan's implementation, urgency of action and immediate priorities.

The Panel was invited to provide insights, perspectives and advice to the Department on the specific matters considered during the meeting.

Homes for Queenslanders

Minister Scanlon and the Director-General of the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works briefed the Panel on *Homes for Queenslanders*, a twenty-year strategy to increase housing supply, support Queensland renters, improve housing affordability, and increase frontline services. The Panel commended the Minister on the plan, referring to it as being 'the best in the nation'.

The Board's immediate priorities to deliver on the 50+ commitments under the plan were discussed, namely the increase of Rent Connect officers and critical response teams across the State, the 20 per cent uplift in funding for Specialist Homelessness Service providers, the establishment of an Infill Fund and State Facilitated Development streamlined process to progress development applications, and collaboration with the Australian Government on national agreements and funding programs.

The Panel recognised the significant gains made to date, as well as referenced the continuing challenges to overcome and opportunities to be considered in the planning reform, housing delivery, affordable housing and community housing sector capacity-building areas moving forward. Minister Scanlon and the Director-General welcomed the Panel's feedback and insights on specific issues, gaps and priorities.

Panel discussions

The Panel was then briefed more specifically on *Pillar 1 - Build more homes faster* and *Pillar 4 - Boost social housing* under *Homes for Queenslanders*. These briefings focused on how these initiatives would address challenges in the planning system to facilitate

reasonable and moderate housing development, and increase the supply and delivery of social housing homes for Queenslanders.

Key points the Panel discussed included how the delivery of social and affordable housing is planned and allocated, how housing need informs the planning scheme response, challenges community housing providers (CHPs) have regarding their funding models and the support CHPs need to deliver more housing and faster, capacity building support and funding already provided to these CHPs, and the effectiveness of block redevelopment to expand stock, increase supply and address overcrowding in remote communities.

The approach taken by the Queensland Government when submitting a Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) bid was of particular interest to the Panel. The 'Team Queensland' bid aimed to ensure the State was well placed to receive its fair share of available HAFF funding. There will be opportunities for CHPs to partner with the Queensland Government to deliver projects bid under the HAFF and the Panel welcomed this approach.

An update was also provided to the Panel on the development of the Far North Queensland Regional Plan. The Panel highlighted unique regional factors to be considered in the development of this plan, namely climatic considerations, higher population density in coastal areas, and the significant labour and construction costs impacting the delivery of housing outcomes in regional areas.

Matters for advice

The Panel was invited to provide feedback on the current proposed criteria for State Facilitated Development and definition of affordable housing (for the purpose of State Facilitated Development). The Minister will use this criteria to determine if a development application can be considered a State Facilitated Development, which would then allow the developer to access planning concessions to assist in the delivery of the development. The Panel advised that the proposed criteria for State Facilitated Development was clear, however recommended further consideration of the definition of affordable housing to avoid unintended consequences.

Comments from Panel Chair, Julie Saunders

The Panel commends the Government on the release of *Homes for Queenslanders* and the significant commitment to delivering more social housing.

This, together with the 'Team Qld' Housing Australia Future Fund bid and other levers like State Facilitated Development, are important to unlocking more supply.