

# MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release



## **Budget 2024: welcome progress on housing, but not enough**

**Tonight's Federal Budget backs up AHNA's call for housing abundance: building more homes where Australians want to live is the most important long-term answer to Australia's housing challenges. However, there's still much more to be done.**

### **Infrastructure spending well-received—but most should be targeted to existing suburbs**

We welcome the Commonwealth's allocation of an additional \$1 billion to assist states and territories in funding new community infrastructure, as well as additional funding for social housing and homelessness services under the National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness.

However, this funding must be focused on delivering more homes in established suburbs, rather than subsidising further greenfield developments. Infrastructure upgrades in established suburbs, rather than greenfield areas, are a much more cost-effective way of delivering homes in areas that provide economic opportunities.

High-quality footpath and cycleway networks are crucial to giving people transport choice and making our communities more sustainable. The \$100 million funding (over 4 years) for active transport will help states and territories deliver more sustainable and liveable communities—but it pales in comparison to the billions of dollars being spent on car-centric infrastructure.

### **Proposed reforms will barely make a dent**

We also welcome the announcement that the Commonwealth will be fast-tracking feasibility studies to release Commonwealth land to support social and affordable housing. [AHNA has previously called](#) for the Commonwealth to prioritise the use of its surplus land for social housing. For this program to work effectively, the Commonwealth must work with state, territory and local governments to ensure these sites aren't subject to arbitrary planning restrictions. We look forward to seeing the details of this program.

Increasing Commonwealth Rent Assistance will also provide some immediate relief to our most vulnerable renters. However an increase of up to \$25 per fortnight is not enough when many renters are facing much larger rent increases. The Government must do much more to help low-income renters.

The Budget acknowledges that building the homes we need will require a larger skilled workforce within our construction sector. The announcement of 20,000 fee-free TAFE and pre-apprenticeship places is a positive step, as is the fast-track program for migrants with relevant skills.

However, [Master Builders Australia estimates we need 486,000 more construction industry workers by 2026](#) if we are to meet our housing and infrastructure ambitions. To achieve this, we need to invest even more in our TAFE sector, as well as allowing more skilled tradespeople to move to Australia.

## **Australia needs a national land use strategy**

Finally, we welcome the additional funding to the Treasury and the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council to support housing policy advice and delivery. However, a notable missed opportunity in this Budget is the creation of a national land use strategy.

Land use policy is fundamental in solving our housing supply shortage. While land use regulations are a state and territory responsibility, the Commonwealth must take a leading role in coordinating policy at a national level. Federal agencies lack capabilities in urban economics and planning, which are needed to develop a national approach to how we use land.

The Treasurer has put housing front and centre of this Budget—the Government's announcements are positive, but much more is needed.

## **Quotes attributable to AHNA's member organisations:**

"The Commonwealth is stepping up to support the Victorian Housing Statement by funding infrastructure and social housing. What's crucial is that this funding does not simply flow down the path of least resistance, pushing people out onto our urban fringe.

"Instead, the Commonwealth must ensure that this funding is used to build out the infrastructure that enables more homes to be built in the high-amenity parts of our cities, where people most want to live." — **Jonathan O'Brien, Lead Organiser, YIMBY Melbourne**

"We're happy to see housing made a priority in the Budget, but we need more. We need a bigger Rent Assistance increase to keep up with the \$100 a week rent hikes people are facing. Much more investment in infrastructure and incentive payments to the states will be needed if we're going to hit the National Housing Accord target." — **Justin Simon, Chair, Sydney YIMBY**

"The Commonwealth has an opportunity with this budget to turn inner city Defence land like Victoria Barracks into new housing. What better Olympic legacy for Brisbane than new public, community and affordable homes right near our major venues?" — **Kurt Labuschewski, Organiser, Greater Brisbane**

“Light Rail Stage 2B is critical if we want to build more homes for Canberrans without sacrificing our environment, and the Federal Government’s \$50 million contribution to progress Light Rail planning is welcome. The ACT Government must make the most of the Commonwealth’s housing announcements by accelerating Missing Middle planning reforms and fast-tracking public and social housing.” — **Andrew Donnellan, Secretary, Greater Canberra**

## About the Abundant Housing Network Australia

The Abundant Housing Network Australia is a national alliance of independent, grassroots campaigners working to build a new vision for housing and cities—one that’s more sustainable, liveable and affordable for everyone.

AHNA’s members are [Greater Canberra](#), [YIMBY Melbourne](#), [Sydney YIMBY](#) and [Greater Brisbane](#).

We came together in 2023 to forge a new urbanist politics that brings together renters, homeowners, planners, transport advocates and all lovers of cities.

We represent thousands of people across Australia who want to see their cities grow and mature, who want secure and affordable rentals and who want to live near their families, friends and communities — but who feel drowned out by a debate dominated by a few loud voices.

We believe housing abundance—**building more homes where people want to live**—is key to solving the housing crisis and building the kind of cities people love.

Abundance gives everyone greater choice in where they live, gives renters better bargaining power, encourages better use of public infrastructure, and is more environmentally sustainable than sprawl.

**ENDS**

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Local media spokespeople are available from our member organisations in Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane on request.