

Social housing in New South Wales



Report 1: Contemporary analysis

June 2021

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Centre for Social Impact, UNSW



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, commissioned by the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, examines the commitments of the New South Wales (NSW) Government since 2016 to develop new, additional social housing dwellings. The report is the first in a two-part series focused on the social housing system in NSW. The second report, *Social Housing in New South Wales: Future Impact*, examines the projected NSW Housing Register given current levels of investment in social housing. It also examines the estimated impact of investing in 5,000 new social housing homes per year for the next ten years on:

- the number of people experiencing homelessness
- the number of people on the social housing waiting list
- the number of people experiencing housing stress.

Section One of this report details the public commitments made by the NSW Government in relation to the development of new social housing dwellings since 2016. This includes commitments made under *Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW* (Communities Plus and the Social and Affordable Housing Fund), the 2020-21 NSW Budget and the Community Housing Innovation Fund. Based on publicly available information, it is estimated that since 2016 **the NSW Government has committed to build 9,386 new social housing properties by 2026.**

Section Two - Social housing in construction and delivered in NSW since 2016 Section Two provides an overview of the social housing that is in construction or has already been delivered in NSW since 2016. This includes construction through the Social and Affordable Housing Fund, Communities Plus and through the sale of properties in the Rocks/Millers Point.

Section Three provides current data from the NSW Housing Register and analysis of the number of people waiting for social housing against the number of social housing properties that have been committed.

Sections Four and Five provide an analysis of the financial commitments made by the NSW Government in relation to social housing. This includes analysis of the NSW Government's spending on social housing per capita and social housing as a proportion of total housing. These sections highlight that both **social housing total expenditure per capita** and **social housing as a proportion of total housing stock are in decline in NSW**. Section Four and Section Five also compare data from NSW with other states and territories in Australia. Comparative analysis reveals that **NSW has the third lowest social housing total expenditure per capita** and the **fourth lowest social housing stock** as a portion of total housing stock of Australian states and territories.

Section Six compares the social housing system in NSW with New Zealand, Canada, England and Scotland. It also examines the proportion of social housing as a percentage of total housing stock in NSW against several international jurisdictions, finding that **the percentage of total housing stock that is social housing is much lower in NSW than in many countries**.

This report finds that the additional social housing dwellings announced by the NSW Government since 2016 are insufficient to address the current high numbers of people waiting to access social housing. Despite the NSW Government's commitments through *Future Directions for Social Housing*, the 2020-21 NSW Budget and the Community Housing Innovation Fund, both social housing total expenditure per capita and social housing as a proportion of total housing stock are in decline in NSW.

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SECTION ONE - NSW GOVERNMENT PUBLIC COMMITMENTS SINCE 2016

- *Since 2016, the NSW government has committed to build **approximately 9,386 new social housing dwellings over the next ten years.***

INTRODUCTION

This section examines the public commitments made by the NSW Government since 2016 in relation to development of new social housing dwellings.

Accurately compiling and aggregating in order to understand the NSW Government's commitments to new, additional social housing stock is difficult due to the way data has been presented. The NSW Government's announcements in relation to new social housing construction since 2016 have been subject to:

- **Double counting housing stock:** The same housing announcements have been presented on multiple occasions, resulting in announcements being double counted.
- **Replacements announced as new builds:** Social housing dwellings being built as replacements for existing social housing stock have been announced as new builds. While these dwellings are newly constructed, they do not impact the actual number of available social housing dwellings. Additionally, the impact of relocating households as these buildings are demolished and rebuilt has often not been mentioned.
- **The absence of a single repository of information:** Information has been compiled from multiple sources, including media releases and information from individual announcements on NSW Government pages. Social housing stock figures have been presented without a consistent methodology, contributing to uncertainty.

Despite the above limitations, this report outlines below the major NSW Government commitments in relation to the development of new social housing based upon the best available information.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR SOCIAL HOUSING NSW

The NSW Government announced *Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW* (Future Directions) in January 2016, outlining the Government's 10-year vision for social housing and its aim to reduce homelessness, provide more housing and support for those needing social housing, and provide more support to help people divert from or successfully transition out of the social housing system. Future Directions identified 'more social housing' as one of three strategic priorities committed to by the NSW Government.

To increase the number of social housing dwellings, Future Directions indicated the NSW Government would primarily rely on two programs- Communities Plus and the Social and Affordable Housing Fund.

Communities Plus – Communities Plus was originally announced in 2015 by the NSW Government and is a \$22 billion redevelopment program of Land and Housing Corporation social housing sites throughout NSW. Communities Plus aims to develop integrated communities of private, social, and affordable housing in partnership with non-government housing providers and private sector developers. Under Communities Plus, the NSW Government has committed to build 23,000 new and replacement social housing dwellings, 500 affordable housing dwellings and up to 40,000 private dwellings through redevelopment projects on existing social housing estates over the next 10 years. (NSW DCJ, 2019b). Previous analysis of Communities Plus has found that of the 23,000 social housing dwellings announced under Communities Plus, approximately 17,000 are replacement stock. (Pawson, 2018). The number of new, additional social housing dwellings committed under Communities Plus would therefore be approximately 6000.

Social and Affordable Housing Fund – The Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF) was established in 2015 following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the NSW Government, Infrastructure Australia and the NSW Council of Social Services (NCOSS). It provided an investment fund of up to \$1.1 billion to support the delivery of social and affordable housing through the delivery of ‘innovative partnerships between community housing providers, non-government organisations and the private sector’ (NSW Government, 2016). The scheme aims to deliver 3,400 additional social and affordable homes in NSW by 2023, with 70% of the homes to be available for social housing tenancies (NSW DCJ, 2019d).

COMMUNITY HOUSING INNOVATION FUND

In December 2018, the NSW Government announced the Community Housing Innovation Fund (CHIF), under which it funds a portion of private social and affordable housing projects developed by community housing providers. CHIF provided \$50 million over a 3-year time frame targeting 150 new social and affordable dwellings (Anthony & Lu, 2020). No information was obtained on the percentage of social versus affordable housing targeted under the CHIF. Note the tender for CHIF closed in 2021.

NSW BUDGET 2020-21

In the *NSW Budget 2020-21*, the NSW Government announced \$812 million in funding to support the delivery of social housing (NSW Government, 2020). This funding included:

- \$250 million for a housing construction program over the next two years on more than 50 identified projects, delivering about 580 new social housing dwellings across metropolitan and regional areas.¹
- \$150 million to accelerate the place-based redevelopment projects at the Airds-Bradbury and Claymore housing estates, delivering more than 500 new social homes.
- More than \$145 million to supply more than 200 new homes as Aboriginal housing, upgrades, and maintenance works (NSW Government, 2020).

It should be noted that the redevelopment projects at Airds-Bradbury and Claymore housing estates

¹ No further publicly available information was found in relation to the location of 50 identified projects and whether these constitute previously announced social housing.

were previously announced by the NSW Government.

Therefore, under the NSW 20-21 Budget, the NSW Government committed to providing approximately 780 new properties (including Aboriginal housing).

TOTAL NSW GOVERNMENT SOCIAL HOUSING COMMITMENTS SINCE 2016

Based on publicly available information, it is estimated that the NSW Government has committed to building **9,386** new social housing properties since 2016. As detailed above, providing an accurate figure is challenged by issues of transparency. As per Table 1, the following assumptions have been made in calculating the figure of 9,386 new social housing dwellings:

- *SAHF* – Publicly available data on the numbers of social housing properties to be constructed by successful tenderers for SAHF contracts was only available for one provider. For the other providers, the minimum requirement of 70% social housing has been used.
- *CHIF*- 70% of properties funded under the program are for social housing.
- *NSW Budget 2020-21*- the 780 new social housing dwellings across 50 identified metropolitan and regional areas are not previously announced projects or rebuilds. ‘Aboriginal housing’ has also been included as social housing.

Table 1. NSW Government commitments since 2016

NSW Government Commitment	Number of new social housing properties committed (approx.)	Timeframe
Communities Plus	6000	10 years
Social and Affordable Housing Fund	2501 ²	Dwellings are delivered progressively in stages over a three-to-four-year timeframe with all dwellings expected to be delivered by 2023 (NSW DCJ, 2019c)
Community Housing Innovation Fund	105 ³	3 years (tender process commenced 2021) (Australian Tenders, 2021)
NSW Budget 2020-21	780 ⁴	Funding for housing construction provided over two years with various timeframes for construction for the 50 projects
TOTAL	9,386	

² See Table 2 for further analysis of SAHF properties.

³ Note, no breakdown on the social versus affordable properties funded under the CHIF was publicly available. The breakdown of 70% social housing to 30% affordable housing (based on SAHF) has been assumed.

⁴ Precludes previously announced projects in the Airds-Bradbury and Claymore housing estates and includes Aboriginal housing under social housing.

SECTION TWO – SOCIAL HOUSING IN CONSTRUCTION AND DELIVERED IN NSW SINCE 2016

INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of social housing dwellings currently in construction or already delivered in the period following 2016. Data has been primarily drawn from information listed on the NSW Government's Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and Department of Communities and Justice's websites.

MILLERS POINT AND THE ROCKS

In March 2014, New South Wales government announced its intent to sell 293 public housing dwellings in Millers Point, Dawes Point, and the Rocks, as well as 79 apartments in the Sirius Building built for public housing (NSW DCJ, 2018). The NSW Government indicated that proceeds from the sale would fund approximately 1500 new social housing dwellings.

As of March 2021, a total of 1,505 social housing units have been completed and 354 units are under construction as a result of the Millers Point sales (NSW FACS, 2021).

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUND

Two procurement processes have been conducted for SAHF and a total of nine contracts have been awarded to successful bids, as outlined in Table 2. Each of the community housing providers contracted under SAHF will deliver access to accommodation, access management and tenancy management services to properties for 25 years (Compass Housing, 2020).

In the first stage (SAHF1) in March 2017, five community housing providers were approved to deliver 2,200 social and affordable houses in both metro and regional NSW:

- Baptist Care NSW & ACT
- UnitingCare
- SGCH Sustainability Ltd
- St Vincent de Paul Housing
- Compass Housing Services Co Ltd.

In the second stage (SAHF2) in January 2019, four community housing providers were approved to deliver 1,200 dwellings:

- Anglicare
- Housing Plus
- SGCH Portfolio Ltd
- Uniting NSW & ACT.

As of May 2021, close to 2,800 properties had been completed or were under construction under SAHF (Compass Housing, 2020).

Table 2. Developments under the Social and Affordable Housing Fund

	Contracted Provider	Number of new social and affordable housing properties	Estimated social housing properties ⁵	Property Type/ details
SAHF Round One-	Baptist Care NSW & ACT	500	380 ⁶	<i>Five Dock-/ Kitty Doyle apartment-</i> 79 apartments for seniors <i>Elderslie</i> -122 units for seniors and families <i>Carlingford-</i> 162 units for seniors and families
	Compass Housing	600 ⁷	420	Most homes will be one- and two-bedroom units for ⁸
	SGCH Sustainability Ltd	300	210	NA
	St Vincent de Paul Housing	502 ⁹	350	NA
	Uniting NSW & ACT	300 ¹⁰	210	NA
SAHF Round Two¹¹	Anglicare	550	385	NA
	Housing Plus	220	154	Brickworks (20 units) will be a mix of one- and two-bedroom dwellings ¹²
	SGCH Portfolio Ltd	260	182	NA
	Uniting NSW & ACT	300	210	NA
TOTAL		3532	2501	

⁵ Unless stated otherwise estimates are based on the minimum 70% requirement for social housing under SAHF

⁶ As per the Baptist Care website, 24% of SAHF are designated affordable housing, with an estimated 76% social housing (BaptistCare, n.d.)

⁷ (Compass Housing, 2021)

⁸ (Compass Housing, 2021)

⁹ (St Vincent de Paul Society, 2020)

¹⁰ (Uniting, n.d.)

¹¹ (NSW DCJ, 2019a)

¹² (Housing Plus, 2020)

COMMUNITIES PLUS

Table 3 and Table 4 provide an overview of publicly available information on the construction of properties under the Communities Plus program¹³. Data for Tables 3 and 4 has been primarily drawn from the NSW Land and Housing Corporation's website.

Greater Sydney

Table 3. NSW Government commitments in Greater Sydney under Communities Plus

Project	Date announced	Existing social housing stock at site	Projected social housing stock	New additional housing stock	Number of bedrooms	Dwelling types	Delivery timeline	Number of completed dwellings
Airds-Bradbury Estate (NSW, 2021s)	Originally announced in 2012 <i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	800 tenancies relocated (1410 social homes in area) (NSW, 2017a)	630 (NSW, 2021s)	Loss of 170 tenancies	NA	NA	NA	NA
Anderson Avenue and Alamein Avenue, Liverpool (NSW, 2020k)	NA	5	15	10	NA	Apartments	Construction is expected to commence in early 2021	NA
Arncliffe Estate (NSW, 2021an)	NA	142	180	38	NA	NA	NA	NA
Bigge Street, Warwick Farm (NSW, 2021r)		NA	52	52	28 one-bedroom and 24 two-bedrooms	Apartments	Construction is due to be completed in early 2022	NA

¹³ For simplicity of analysis, all social housing commitments under the NSW Land and Housing Corporation's site have been allocated to Communities Plus.

Bonnyrigg Estate (NSW, 2021t)	2009	761 (NSW, 2020l)	900	Increase of 139 homes	NA	NA	NA	152 completed 256 by end of 2021
Bright Street Guilford (NSW, 2021a)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	2	8	6	Six two-bedroom and two one-bedrooms	Apartment	Expected to be complete in late 2021	NA
Byloss Street, Chester Hill (NSW, 2020a)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	NA	9	9	Five two-bedroom and four one-bedroom units,	Residential apartment building	2021	NA
Chester Hill (NSW, 2021ae)	NA	NA	10	10	NA	Two-storey, residential building	Completed in 2021	10
Church Street, Lidcombe (NSW, 2020f)	NA	NA	53	53	NA	Apartments	Construction to start in late 2020	NA
Claymore Housing Estates (NSW, 2021v)	Originally announced in 2013 <i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	1,100	450 (NSW, 2021v)	Loss of 650	NA	NA	To be completed in 6-7 years (NSW, 2021v)	NA
Copperfield Dr, Rosemeadow (NSW, 2021w)	NA	165	72	Loss of 93	NA	NA	NA	NA
Croot Street, Hurstville (NSW, 2020h)	NA	NA	14	14	Eight one-bedroom units and six, two-bedroom units	Apartments	Construction to start in early 2021	NA

Cumberland Road, Auburn (NSW, 2020n)	NA	NA	18	18	10 two-bedroom units and eight one-bedroom units	NA	Set for completion in March 2021	NA
Elderslie (NSW, 2021ae)	NA	NA	10	10	NA	Two-storey, residential building	Completed in 2021	10
Emily St, Hurstville (NSW, 2021b)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget)</i>	2	9	7	Three one-bedroom units and six two-bedrooms	Apartment	Expected to be completed end of 2021	NA
Eve St, Guildford (NSW, 2021c)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	2	10	8	Six two-bedroom and four one-bedrooms	Apartment	Expected to be complete in mid-2021	NA
Excelsior St, Guildford (NSW, 2021x)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	NA	10	10	NA	NA	2021	NA.
Explorer St, South Eveleigh (NSW, 2021d)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	NA	120	120	NA	NA	Construction commences in 2023 and finishes in 2025	NA
Forest Rd, Lugarno (NSW, 2021e)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	4	16	12	Eight one-bedroom and eight two-bedrooms	Two-storey residential apartment building	Expected to be completed end of 2021	NA
Cowper St, Glebe (NSW, 2021aj)	NA	19	75	56	Comprising mix of studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments, five three-bedroom terrace homes	Apartments	NA	NA
Franklyn St, Glebe (NSW, 2021y)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	2025	NA

Hilda Ave, Casula (NSW, 2021f)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	3	12	9	Four one-bedroom units and eight two-bedroom units	Apartment	Expected to be complete in mid-2021	NA
Hilltop Road, Merrylands (NSW, 2021ai)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	NA	10	10	Four one-bedroom and six two-bedroom homes	NA	Construction, which is set to finish in late 2021 or early 2022	NA
Ivanhoe Estate (NSW, 2021z)	NA	259	950	691 (NSW, 2017b)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Jersey Road, Blackett (NSW, 2021al)	NA	NA	8	8	Two one-bedroom homes and six two-bedrooms	NA	Completed 2021	8
Kenward Ave, Chester Hill (NSW, 2021g)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	Vacant land	9	9	Three two-bedroom units and six one-bedroom units	Residential apartment building	Expected to be complete in late 2021	NA
Lane Cove (NSW, 2020g)	NA	5	13	8	NA	Apartments (Mixed tenure)	Completed in October 2020	NA
Lethbridge street St Marys (NSW, 2021ah)	NA	2	21	19	13 one-bedroom and eight two-bedroom social homes	Apartment building	Construction on the project is expected to be completed in the first half of 2022	NA
Merle St, Bass Hill (NSW, 2021i)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	Vacant land	10	10	Six two-bedroom and four one-bedroom units	Residential apartment building	Construction to be complete at end of 2021	NA
Miller (NSW, 2021ae)	NA	NA	10	10	NA	Two-storey, residential building	Completed in 2021	10

Murdoch Street, Blackett (NSW, 2021al)	NA	NA	12	12	Six new one-bedroom and six two-bedroom homes	NA	Due for completion in mid-2021	NA
Phillip street St Marys (NSW, 2020e)	NA	3	44	41	NA	Five-storey residential building	Construction is also underway (NSW, 2021ah) ¹⁴ completion in the second half of 2021	NA
Raymond Street, Eastwood (NSW, 2021ag)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	2	8	6	Four two bedroom and four one-bedroom unit	Apartments	Construction commenced March 2021	NA
Redfern (NSW, 2021ab)	2019	Vacant land	70	70	NA	NA	End of 2026	NA
Riverwood Renewal Project (NSW, 2021j)	NA	994	Around 1200	NA	NA	NA	15-20 years	NA
Stoney Creek Rd, Kingsgrove (NSW, 2021m)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	NA	10	10	Six two-bedroom units and four one-bedroom units.	Apartments	Expected to be complete in mid-2021	NA
Sunnyside Cr, North Richmond (NSW, 2021n)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	NA	41	41	13 two-bedroom townhouses and two one-bedroom villas	Townhouses and villas	Construction is now underway and works will continue until early 2022	NA

Telopea Precinct (NSW, 2021ac)	2019	NA	1000 affordable and social housing dwellings	NA	NA	NA	15 + years	NA
Trafalgar Street, Peakhurst (NSW, 2021o)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	6	15	9	Three one-bedroom and 12 two-bedrooms	Three-storey residential apartment	Expected to be completed mid 2021	NA
Villawood Estate (NSW, 2021ad)	2018	Vacant block	Up to 120	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Waterloo Estate	First announced in 2015	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Wellington Road, Chester Hill (NSW, 2020i)	NA	NA	38	38	16 one-bedroom and 22 two-bedroom units	Apartments	Construction proposed to commence in late 2021	NA

Regional NSW

Table 4. NSW Government commitments in regional NSW under Communities Plus

Project	Date announced	Existing social housing stock at site	Projected social housing stock	New additional housing stock	Number of bedrooms		Dwelling types	Delivery timeline	Number of completed dwellings
Beane Street Gosford (NSW, 2021p)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	NA	41		41	21 one-bedroom and 20 two-bedroom units.	Apartments	Construction is underway and will continue until 2022	NA
Blackman Parade, Unanderra Wollongong (NSW, 2020d)	NA	NA	8		8	Four one-bedroom units and four two-bedroom units	NA	Construction to commence in early 2021	NA
Boyd St, Tweed Heads (NSW, 2021af)	NA	NA	40		40	24 two-bedroom units and 16 one-bedroom units.	Seven-storey residential building (Mixed tenure)	Construction work 2021-2022	NA
Coffs Harbour (NSW, 2021ak)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Crown Street, Wollongong (NSW, 2021q)	May 2020	22	18	4	NA	NA	Multi-storey apartment (Mixed tenure)	Construction is expected to commence in early 2022	NA
Fieldsend Street, East Maitland (NSW, 2020b)	NA	2	18		16	Nine one-bedroom units and nine two-bedroom units	Apartment	Construction to start in mid-2021	NA
Glendale (NSW, 2021aa)	NA	Vacant land	6	6	NA	NA	Apartments	NA	Completed

Jemima Street, Unanderra, Wollongong (NSW, 2020d)	NA	NA	10	10	Six one-bedroom and four two-bedroom units	NA	Construction to commence in early 2021	NA
Jubilee Street, South Dubbo (NSW, 2020f)	NA	NA	53	53	NA	Apartments	Construction to start in late 2020	NA
Landa Parade, Waratah West (NSW, 2020m)	NA	NA	10	10	NA	NA	Construction is due to start early 2021	NA
Macarthur Street, Shortland (Thomson, 2020)	NA	2	8	6	NA	Two-storey apartment	Construction began in late 2020	NA
Mary St and 19-25 Hume St Goulburn (NSW, 2021h)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	5	20	15	12 one-bedroom units and eight two-bedroom units	Apartments	Construction is now underway, and works will continue until early 2022	NA
Middleton St, South Kempsey (NSW, 2021am)	NA	NA	6	6	Six one-bedroom social homes	Two-storey residential apartment	Construction is due to be completed late 2021	NA
Queanbeyan East (NSW, 2020g)	NA	4	18	14	Six one-bedroom units and 12 two-bedroom units	Apartments	NA	Completed in October 2020

Richard Street, Adamstown (NSW, 2020m)	<i>Fast tracked in the 2020 NSW Budget</i>	3	14	11	NA	NA	Completion in mid-2021	NA
Robert Street, Corrimal (NSW, 2021k)	2018	Vacant land	7	7	NA	Apartments (Mixed tenure)	Fast tracked- end in 2021	7
Short Street, Dubbo (NSW, 2020j)	NA	NA	8	8	NA	Two-storey apartments	Construction started in 2020	NA
Spring Street, Wagga Wagga (NSW, 2021u)	NA	NA	4	4	NA	Two-storey, residential building	Construction expected to be completed around September 2021	NA
South Parade, Wagga Wagga (NSW, 2021l)	NA	NA	10	10	Eight one and two two-bedroom units	Apartments	Construction is now underway, and works will continue until mid-2021	NA
Stannett Street, Waratah West (NSW, 2020c)	NA	2	8	6	Four two-bedroom units and four one-bedroom units	Apartment	Construction is due to start early 2021	NA
Wauchope (NSW, 2021am)	NA	NA	12	12	Four two-bedroom units and eight one-bedroom units	Two-storey, residential building	Construction is due to be completed in early 2022	NA

SECTION THREE - THE NSW HOUSING REGISTER

INTRODUCTION

The NSW Housing Register is a single list of approved clients waiting for social housing. Applicants are placed on either a general waiting list or a priority waiting list based upon an assessment of their housing need. Applicants with complex housing needs including those experiencing homelessness, who need urgent housing, and who are unable to rent privately are considered for priority housing and placed on the priority waiting list.

It is important to recognise that the NSW Housing Register does not capture the total number of people with a need for social housing. Those with a demonstrated need for social housing may have been removed from the housing register for failing to respond to annual checks on eligibility (Powell et al., 2019). In NSW, if housing applicants are former social housing tenants with prior debt of more than \$500 and are not making regular repayments, they will be suspended from offers, and if they owe more than \$500 and are not paying, they will be removed from the register (Hartley, 2016). People with a need for social housing assistance may be excluded based on their visa status (Powell & Hartley, 2019) or elect to not access social housing (but still require it) for a variety of reasons.

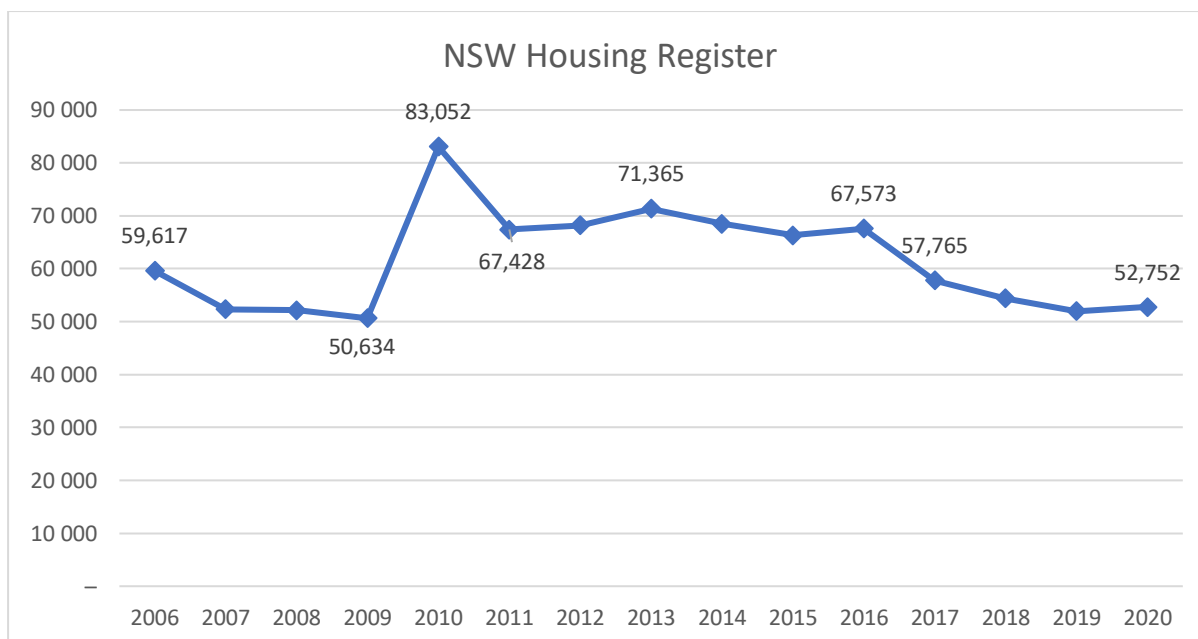
ANALYSIS OF THE NSW HOUSING REGISTER

As of 30 June, 2020, there were 52,752 applicants on the NSW Housing Register (Productivity Commission, 2021). Under the NSW Housing Register, waiting times are listed under allocation zone (groups of suburbs or towns where social housing is available). Expected waiting times for social wait times are listed under one of the following timeframes:

- less than two years
- two to five years
- five to ten years
- more than ten years. (NSW DCJ, 2020).

Wait times are also dependent on the property type that has been applied for (ranging from a studio/one bedroom apartment to a 4-bedroom apartment). Wait times in the Greater Sydney region are commonly five years to ten years, with wait times more than ten years in the Inner West and Eastern suburbs of Sydney allocation zones. For many regional areas in NSW, wait times also tend to be five years to ten years, and in some instances, are more than ten years. (NSW DCJ, 2020).

The average number of people waiting for social housing on the NSW Housing Register over the past 15 years is 61,603. The number of applicants on the waiting list has decreased from the high of 83,052 applicants in 2010 to the 2020 figure of 52,752 applicants (Figure 1). A contributing factor towards the reduction in the reported waiting list figures was the change in counting rules in 2017, whereby suspended applicants were no longer counted in waiting list figures (Productivity Commission, 2021).



Source- Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2021 Table 18A.5 Public housing at 30 June 2020

NSW HOUSING REGISTER AND ANNOUNCED NEW SOCIAL HOUSING

When considering the current number of people waiting for social housing currently on the NSW Housing Register, it is clear that the number of announced new builds will do little to alleviate the need of the number of people on the waiting list.

As is detailed in Section One - NSW Government public commitments since 2016, the NSW Government has announced an estimated 9,386 new, additional social housing dwellings since 2016, with all properties to be built over a 10-year period. Assuming all dwellings will be completed within this period, this provides an average of 938 dwellings per year over the next 10 years.¹⁵

ANNOUNCED NEW SOCIAL HOUSING

The number of additional social housing dwellings announced by the NSW Government since 2016 will not significantly reduce the number of people currently on the NSW Housing Register. Analysis of the social housing required to provide housing to those on the NSW Housing Register is detailed in the second report in this series.

¹⁵ The NSW Government's timeframe for the building of properties under SAHF and Communities Plus has been criticised as unrealistic – see Pawson, H. (2018, May 18). NSW is overselling its social housing commitment. *City Futures Blog*. <https://blogs.unsw.edu.au/cityfutures/blog/2018/05/nsw-is-overselling-its-social-housing-commitment/>

SECTION FOUR – NSW GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON SOCIAL HOUSING PER CAPITA

- *NSW social housing total expenditure per capita has decreased from 2017-18 to 2019-20 and is currently at \$205.84.*
- *NSW has the third lowest social housing total expenditure per capita of all states and territories; behind Northern Territory (\$888.88), ACT (\$638.54), Tasmania (\$389.23), Western Australia (\$381.45), and South Australia (\$238.57).*

INTRODUCTION

Section 4 and Section 5 provide an analysis of the financial commitments made by the NSW Government in relation to social housing. Data has been primarily sourced from the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services 2021 (RoGS). It should be noted that data from the RoGS only covers until 2020.

NSW AND OTHER AUSTRALIAN JURISDICTIONS

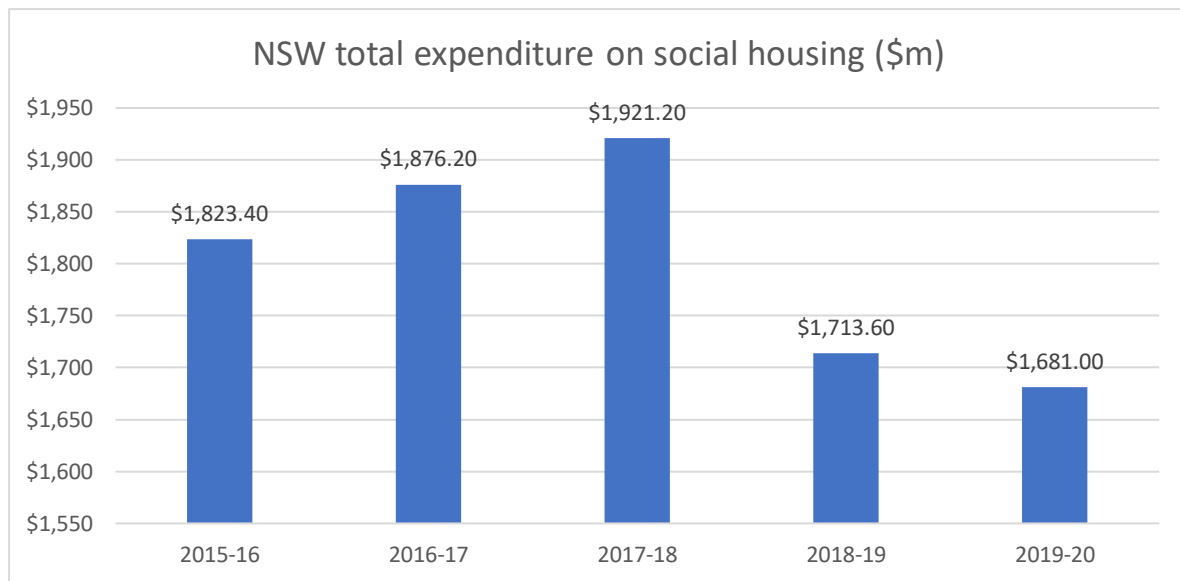
In Australia, in 2019-20, total expenditure on social housing (net recurrent expenditure as well as capital expenditure) was approximately \$5.7 billion.

In NSW, in 2019-2020, total expenditure on social housing was \$1.68 billion. This was distributed as:

- \$953.1 million on public housing
- \$49 million on State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing (SOMIH)
- \$308.8 million on community housing, Indigenous community housing, transitional housing and grants to community housing
- \$370.1 million on capital expenditure.

As shown in Figure 2, the NSW total spending on social housing was at its lowest in five years, down from \$1.71 billion in 2018-19 and further down from \$1.92 billion in 2017-2018.

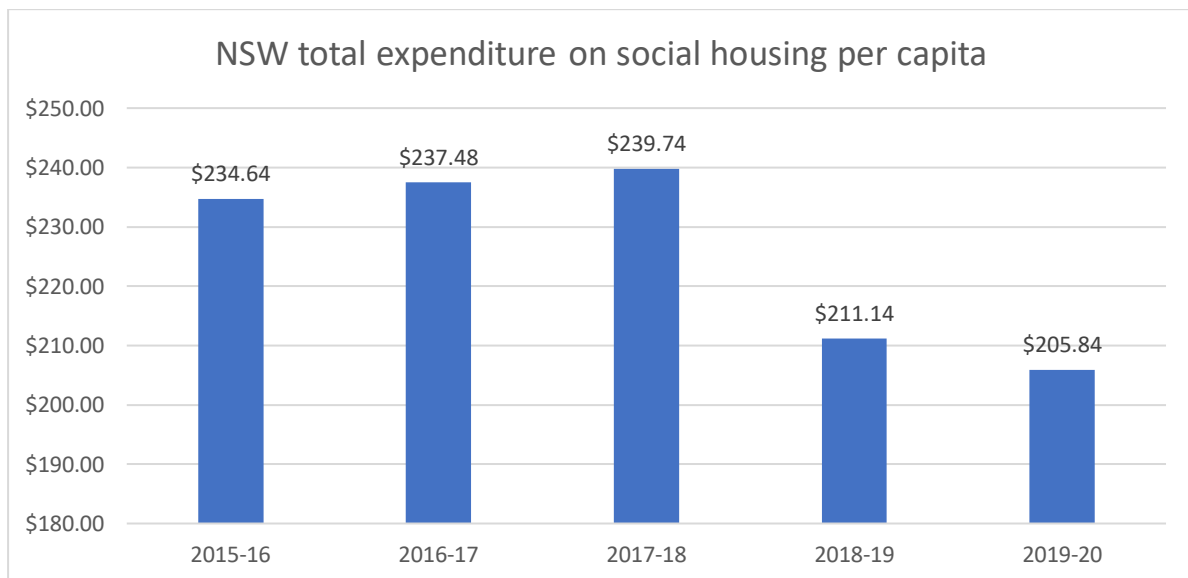
Figure 2. NSW social housing net recurrent expenditure 2015/16- 2019/20



Source- Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2021 Table 18A.1 State and Territory Government expenditure on social housing 2020-21

The reduced NSW Government spending on social housing is reflected in Figure 3 indicating social housing spending per capita in 2019-2020. **The total expenditure on social housing per person in 2019-20 was the lowest in five years at \$205.84**, down from \$211.14 in 2018-19 and from a high of \$239.74 in 2017-18.

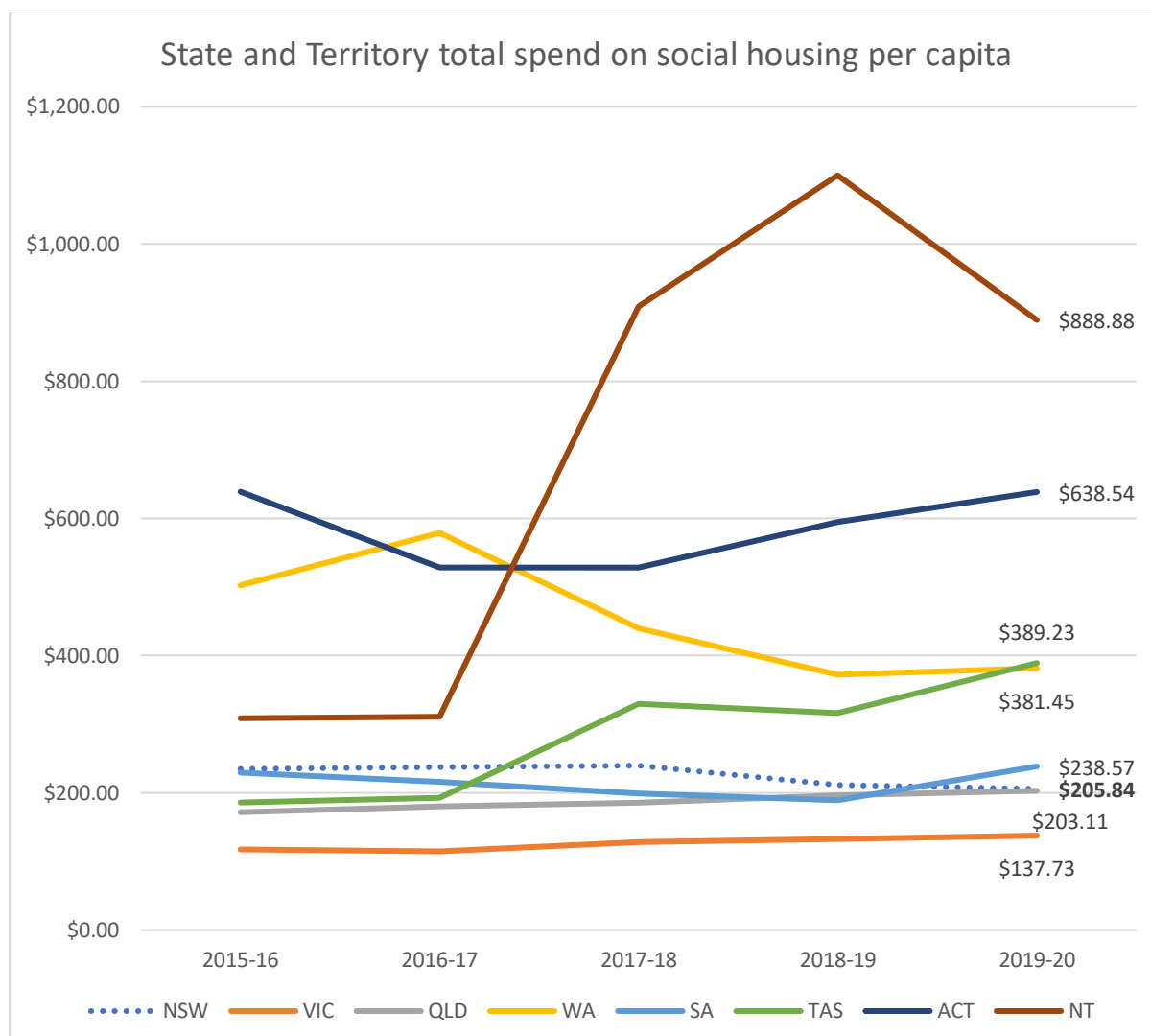
Figure 3. NSW social housing net recurrent expenditure per capita



Source- Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services Table 18A.1 State and Territory Government expenditure on social housing 2020-21

Figure 4 illustrates that NSW total expenditure on social housing per capita 2019-2020 is lower than per capita spending in the Northern Territory (\$888.88), ACT (\$638.54), Tasmania (\$389.23), Western Australia (\$381.45), and South Australia (\$238.57). It is only higher than Victoria (\$137.73) and Queensland (\$203.11).

Figure 4. State and Territory social housing total spend on social housing per capita



Source- Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 18A.1 State and Territory Government expenditure on social housing 2020-21

Commitments in the period following Report on Government Services (2021)

There have been several important commitments made since the latest release of RoGS data by state and territory governments which are not incorporated into the data shown in Figure 4. In addition to the NSW Government's commitments under the 2020-21 Budget and CHIF, the following states have implemented policies to construct new social housing in the period after the collection of RoGs data:

Table 5. State and Territory social housing commitments following 2020

State/Territory	Social housing commitment	Date
Victoria	\$5.4bn <i>Big Housing Build</i> , which targets 9,300 new social housing units over four years (2020-24).	November 2020
Tasmania	\$100 million to deliver an additional 1000 new social houses, in partnership with Community Housing Provider	June 2020
Western Australia	<i>Social Housing Economic Recovery Package</i> which includes \$97 million to build or buy up to 250 new social housing properties	October 2020

This increase in social housing commitments is likely to increase the net recurrent expenditure on social housing per capita for Victoria, Tasmania, and Western Australia. This will potentially raise their per capita investment above NSW, however further research into these commitments is required.

SECTION FIVE - NSW SOCIAL HOUSING AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL HOUSING

- *In 2020 NSW's social housing stock as a proportion of total housing was 4.71%.*
- ***NSW social housing as a proportion of total housing stock has decreased consistently in the ten years since 2011.***
- ***NSW has the fourth lowest social housing stock as a proportion of total housing behind the Northern Territory (14.5%), ACT (6.4%), Tasmania (5.4%), and Western Australia (5.3%).***

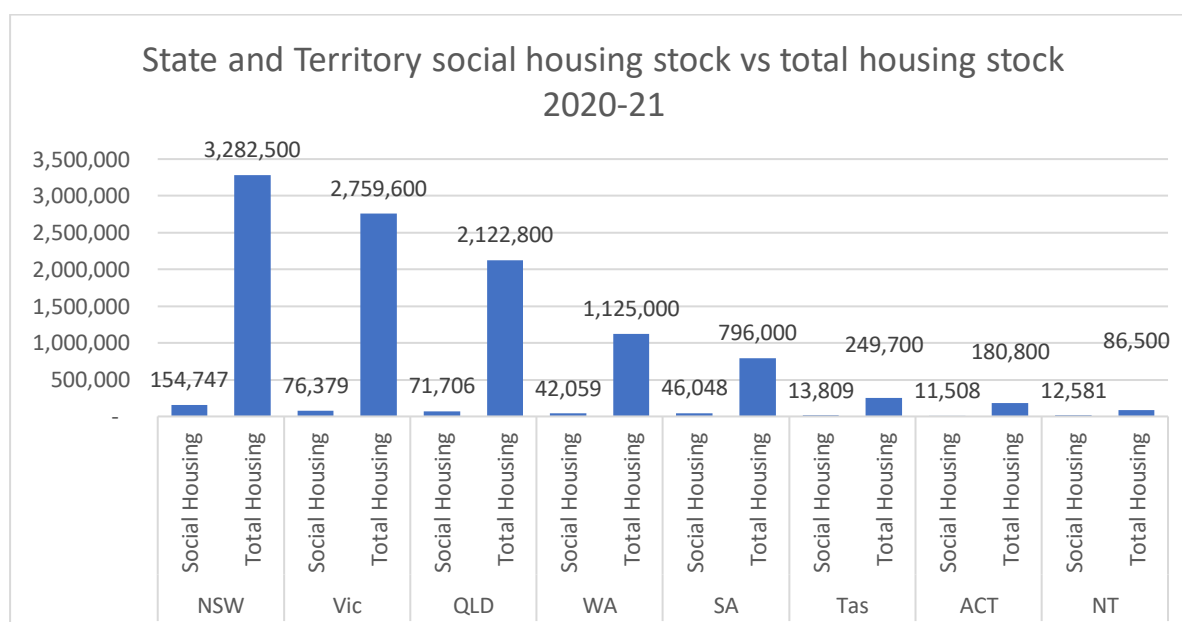
INTRODUCTION

Social housing as a proportion of total housing stock in Australia is best ascertained through a comparison of two data sources – the RoGS and the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Dataset on Values, Mean Price and Number by State and Territories* (ABS, 2021).

NSW AND OTHER AUSTRALIAN JURISDICTIONS

As per the RoGS, in 2020, NSW had 154,747 social housing dwellings. The ABS Dataset identified 3,282,500 total residential properties in NSW (Figure 5). In NSW, in 2020, 4.71% of total housing stock was identified as social housing.

Figure 5. State and Territory social housing stock vs total housing stock 2020-21

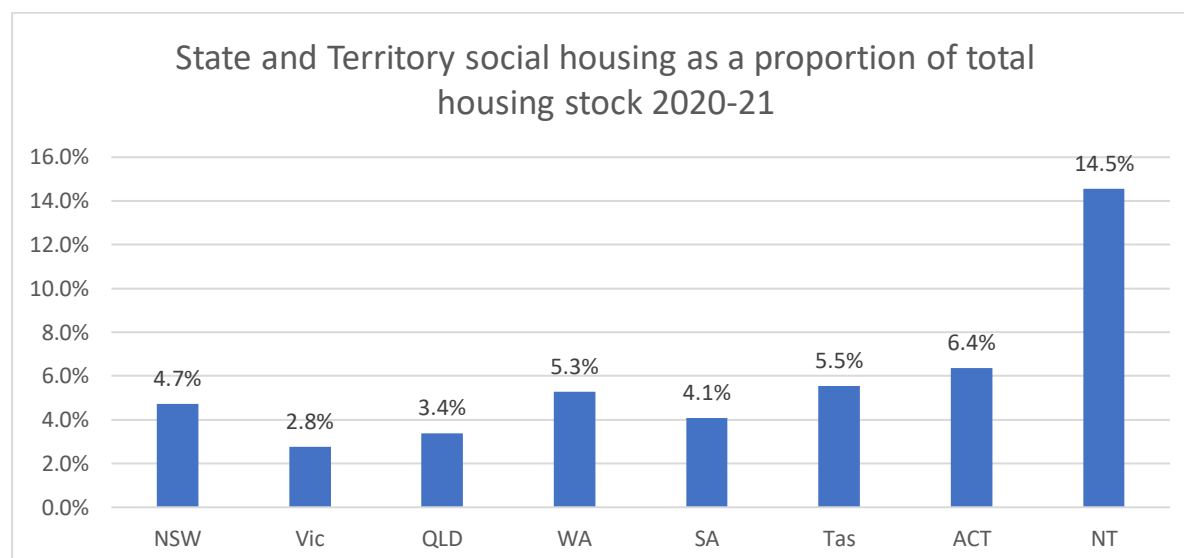


Sources- Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 18A.3 Number of social housing dwellings and ABS Dataset: Residential Dwellings: Values, Mean Price and Number by State and Territories

Compared to other states and territories, NSW has the fifth highest social housing stock as a proportion of total housing stock. NSW has a lower proportion of social housing against residential

housing than the Northern Territory (14.5%), ACT (6.4%), Tasmania (5.5%) and Western Australia (5.3%). NSW has a higher proportion of social housing against residential dwellings than Victoria (2.8%), Queensland (3.4%) and South Australia (4.1%) (Figure 6).

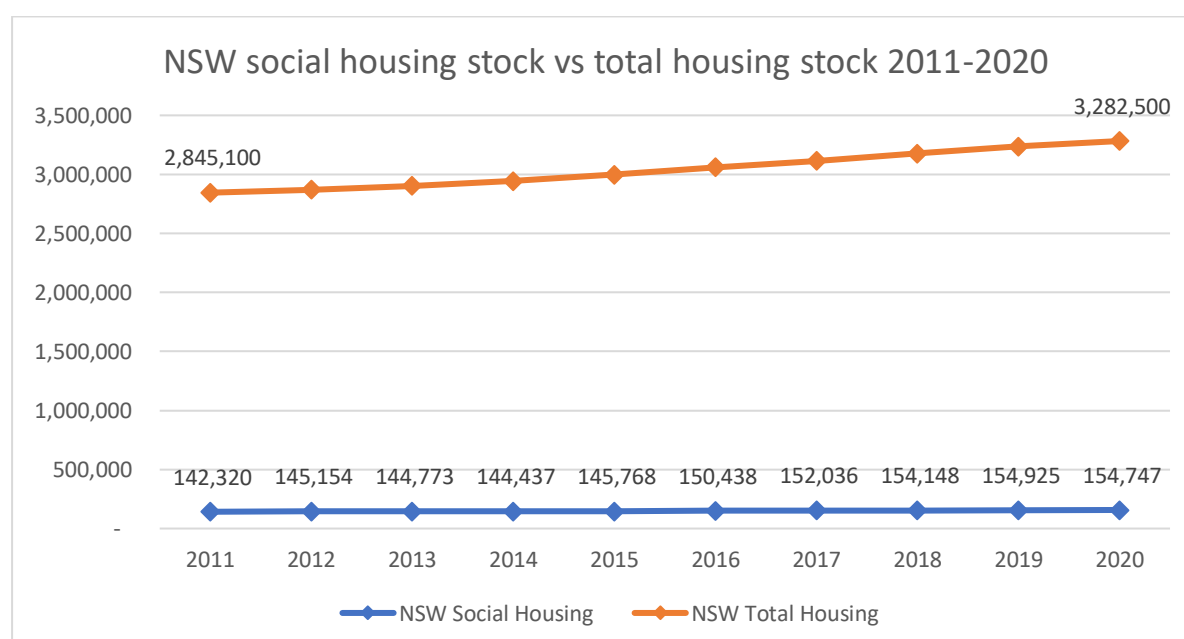
Figure 6. State and Territory social housing as a proportion of total housing stock 2020-21



Sources- Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 18A.3 Number of social housing dwellings and ABS Dataset: Residential Dwellings: Values, Mean Price and Number by State and Territories

The number of dwellings in NSW's total housing stock increased by 15.4% from 2.8 million in 2011 to 3.3 million in 2020. Comparatively, NSW's social housing stock has increased by only 8.7% over the same period from 142,320 to 154,717 (Figure 7).

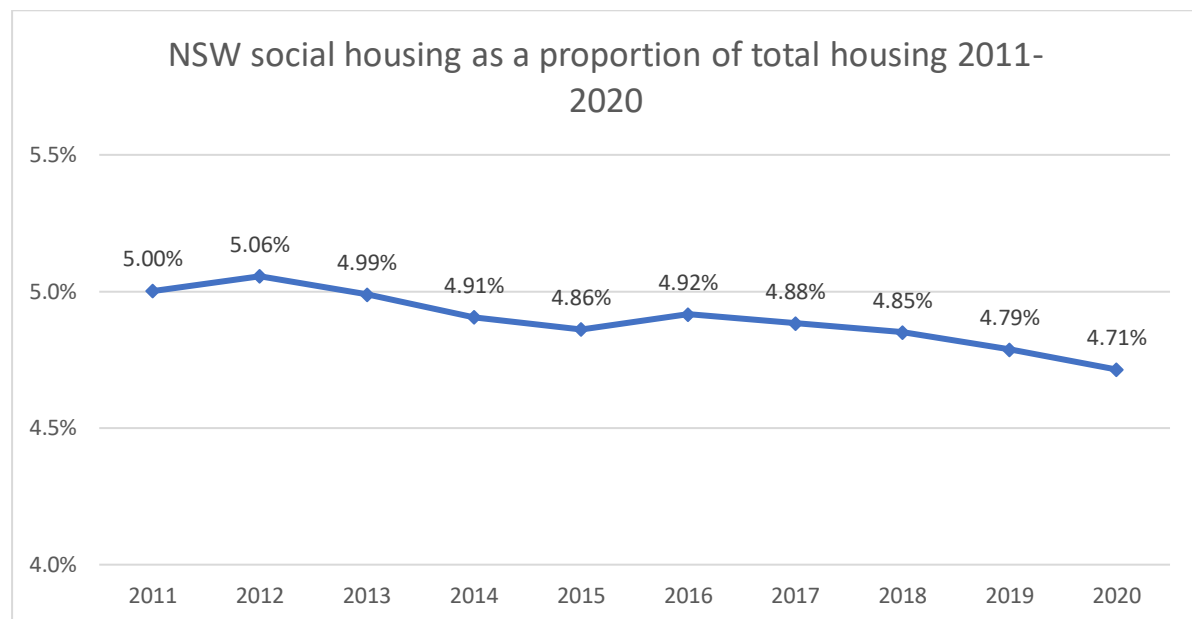
Figure 7. NSW social housing stock vs total housing stock 2011-2020



Sources- Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 18A.3 Number of social housing dwellings and ABS Dataset: Residential Dwellings: Values, Mean Price and Number by State and Territories

Further, when examining social housing as a proportion of total housing stock over time, there has been a consistent decrease since 2012. Social housing as a proportion of total housing in NSW is now at its lowest rate since 2011, at 4.71% (Figure 8). Note that the increase from 2011 to 2012 is attributable to the Federal Government's *Nation Building and Jobs Stimulus Plan* under which over 18,500 social housing dwellings were constructed nationally (AHURI, 2012). No data was available in relation to the increase from 2015 to 2016.

Figure 8. NSW social housing as a proportion of total housing 2011-2020



Sources- Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 18A.3 Number of social housing dwellings and ABS Dataset: Residential Dwellings: Values, Mean Price and Number by State and Territories

SECTION SIX – INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

INTRODUCTION

The current social housing need and recent commitments of several comparative international locations illustrate differing levels of investment in social housing. Where data is available, information regarding the number of properties constructed against the commitments is also provided.

NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand government provides subsidised rental housing through state-owned housing managed by Kāinga Ora (Housing New Zealand) as well as through community housing providers. Most public housing tenants pay no more than 25 percent of their net income on rent, up to the market rent for the property (New Zealand Government, 2021).

As of December 2020, there were 22,521 people on the *New Zealand Public Housing Register*. Around 80% of the applicants on the Public Housing Register have been assessed as ‘Priority A’ (or at risk). On average, people currently wait 183 days to be housed in public housing (New Zealand Government MSD, 2020).

There has been a consistent, significant increase in the number of people on the New Zealand Public Housing register, rising from 3,877 in June 2016 to its current high of 22,251 in December 2020. In contrast, the number of public housing properties in New Zealand has not significantly increased. In December 2015 there were an estimated 60,000 public housing properties, rising to 67,228 in December 2018 (New Zealand Government, 2020).

In response to this, the New Zealand Government released the *Public Housing Plan 2018-2022*, in August 2018, which outlined the following commitments in relation to public housing:

- funding to increase the supply of public housing by around 6,400 places between July 2018 and June 2022 – about 1,600 places per year on average across Housing New Zealand and Community Housing Providers
- Housing New Zealand to build at least 1,000 net new houses per year on average over the next four years.

This would bring the total number of public housing places in New Zealand to 73,628 by June 2022 (an increase from the 67,228 places available in 2018).

In January 2021, the New Zealand Government released the *Public Housing Plan 2021-2024*, superseding the previous plan. The 2021-2024 Plan amended the timeframe for the delivery of the new supply of public housing, with the commitment now to increase the number of public housing places in New Zealand to 81,278 by 2024 (an increase of 14,050 from 2018) (New Zealand Government, 2021).

CANADA

In Canada, social (which includes public and community housing) and affordable housing refers to non-market rental housing which are managed by provinces.

Data from 2018 shows that more than 283,000 households were on the waitlist for social and affordable housing and nearly two-thirds (173, 600 households) had been on the waitlist for two years or longer (Government of Canada, 2019).

In November 2017, a National Housing Strategy (NHS) outlined a \$70+ billion, ten-year plan to deliver more affordable homes to Canadians. Some of the priority areas for action are housing for those in the greatest need and social housing sustainability. The NHS aims to cut chronic homelessness by 50%, remove 530,000 families from housing need, build 125,000 new homes and refurbish more than 300,000 public housing units over the ten year period. (CMHC, 2021).

ENGLAND

Social housing in England is delivered through local governments and housing providers. Research indicates that the number of people on the social housing waitlist is 3.8 million, which equates to 1.6 million households. Due to the significant shortage of social homes, some people have been on the wait list for almost two decades (National Housing Federation, 2020).

In 2019, 34,220 new social and affordable homes were completed - the largest number of new homes constructed over the previous seven years (2013, 22,430 new homes) (Housing Europe, 2021). The Strategic Plan 2018/19-2022/23 proposes to deliver 130,000 affordable homes by March 2022, which will include at least 12, 500 homes for social rent (Homes England, 2018).

SCOTLAND

According to the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Scotland needs to provide 53,000 social and affordable housing homes in the period 2021-26 to address outstanding need (Affordable Housing Need in Scotland post-2021, 2020).

The Scottish Government's housing strategy, *Housing to 2040* aims to deliver affordable homes throughout the country with a goal of providing 100,000 affordable homes by 2031/32 (Scottish Government, 2021).

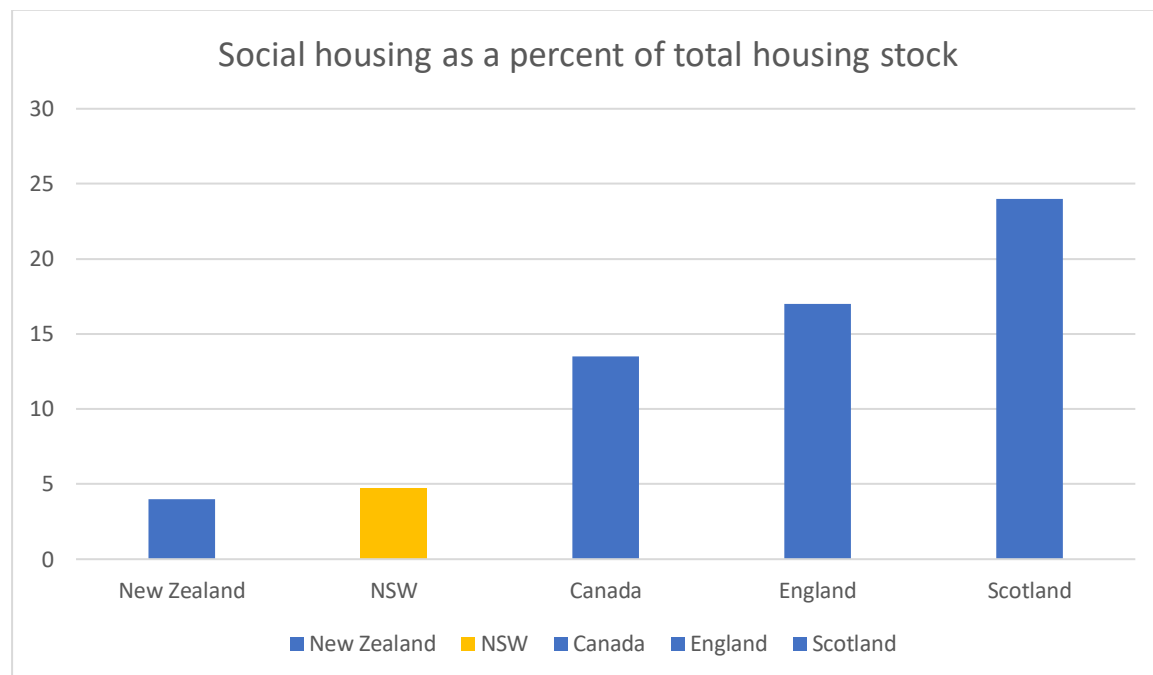
In the financial year 2019/20, 9,286 affordable homes were built, and this equates to a rate of 17 homes delivered per 10,000 population. This rate is higher than in England, where 10.2 per 10,000 population were delivered and 11.3 per 10, 000 population in Wales. Scotland has seen higher annual rates of new affordable homes being delivered than other UK countries. For example, between 2007/08 and 2019/20 the annual average supply of affordable homes per person of the population in Scotland was 13.8 per 10,000 population compared to England (9.7 per 10,000 population), Wales (7.9 per 10,000 population) and Northern Ireland (12.8 per 10,000 population- average across the years of 2010/11 to 2018/19).

INTERNATIONAL JURISDICTIONS - COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGE OF SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK

Whilst acknowledging NSW is only one state jurisdiction within Australia, Figure 9 compares the proportion of social housing as a percentage of total housing stock in NSW with several international jurisdictions.

As is evident in Figure 9, there is a wide variety in the levels of spending on social housing. Of the comparable countries outlined previously, NSW (4.4%) only has a higher percentage of social housing than New Zealand (3%).¹⁶ Both England (17%) and Scotland (24%) have significantly higher rates of social housing as a percentage of total of housing stock than New South Wales. Canada has a high percentage (13.5%) however it should be noted that this figure includes both social and affordable housing dwellings, with no separate data for social housing available identified.

Figure 9. Social housing as a proportion of total housing stock - international comparisons



Source- *State of Housing in Europe 2021* (Housing Europe, 2021), RoGS Table 18A.3 Number of social housing, Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/191122/dq191122c-eng.htm>, <https://www.stats.govt.nz/>

¹⁶ The latest data available for New Zealand is from 2015

CONCLUSION

This report finds that the additional social housing dwellings announced by the NSW Government since 2016 will not adequately address the current high number of people waiting to access social housing. Despite the NSW Government's commitments through *Future Directions for Social Housing*, the 2020-21 NSW Budget and the Community Housing Innovation Fund, both social housing total expenditure per capita and social housing as a proportion of total housing stock are in decline in NSW.

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