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# AUSTRALIA'S HOUSING CRISIS DEMANDS A NATIONAL STRATEGY FROM THE NEW FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

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Following the 2022 federal election, RAHU emphasises the responsibility of the Albanese Government, and the Minister for Housing, Julie Collins, to address Australia's ongoing housing crisis. Neither wages nor welfare are meeting the rapidly increasing cost of living.

In the last year, median rent prices increased by 8.7%, while wages rose by 2.1%.<sup>1</sup> Australia's housing crisis is worsening, and the pandemic has exacerbated the struggles faced by renters and rough sleepers.

RAHU affirms the need for urgent action from the new government in order to keep Australians in their homes. We refuse to be left behind.

## **RAHU IS CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO**

### **• Introduce rent caps**

- Regulate the rental market by tying rent prices with the median wage
- Limit rent increases to a maximum of 12 months, tied to the Consumer Price Index

### **• Provide federal funding for new public housing builds**

- Five times the current amount committed is required in Victoria alone

### **• Legislate meaningful housing policy**

- Introduce tax reform that eliminates negative gearing and disincentivises vacant homes
- Introduce incentives for long term leases of 5 years
- Raise the rate of welfare payments and rent assistance

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<sup>1</sup> Kate Colvin, *PM, your plan to fix housing crisis should reach for the stars*, The Sydney Morning Herald, May 31, 2022, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/pm-your-plan-to-fix-housing-crisis-should-reach-for-the-stars-20220530-p5aph2.html>.



Per the 2021 rental survey, 91% of RAHU cases were living in rental stress,<sup>2</sup> with rent representing their most significant expense. In many situations, renters are forgoing medicine and food in order to pay rent, and it is estimated that 50 out of every 10,000 people nationally are homeless—a 20% increase since 2011.<sup>3</sup> Renters make up 32% of the national population, almost half of whom are living in financial stress.<sup>4</sup>

With only three homes affordable to a single Jobseeker in Australia as at April 2021,<sup>5</sup> increased funding for public housing is vital in order to accommodate the existing and increasing demand for housing, with 110,000 people on the waitlist in Victoria alone.<sup>6</sup>

RAHU is calling on the government to raise the rate of welfare payments and rent assistance to address rental stress and poverty among low and middle-income earners. Poverty alienates people from their basic needs, and translates into negative outcomes in both physical and mental health, causing long-term, structural harm to social and economic wellbeing. With a leader who enjoyed the security and stability of public housing, the Albanese Government must take meaningful action now to allow Australian families the same right.

RAHU reaffirms our demands on the government to commit to meaningful housing policy, and will continue to take action to hold policymakers accountable.

### QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO

"It is clear that people want to take serious action. Renters have voted in a new government, and they can vote them out just the same if we don't see a commitment to a national strategy to address the housing crisis."

- **Eirene Tsolidis Noyce, General Secretary**

"The deliberate immiseration of welfare recipients is an impelling cause of homelessness and housing insecurity. Public housing is essential in responding to the homelessness crisis, representing a crucial preventative and reparative measure for both affected and vulnerable populations."

- **Luca Morgan, Media Team**

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*The Renters and Housing Union (VIC) is a member-run union of renters and people in precarious housing, formed out of the rent strike as a response to the COVID-19 crisis. We collectively organise for the right to safe and secure housing through self-advocacy, education, and frontline eviction defence.*

Find out more and join RAHU [www.rahu.org.au](http://www.rahu.org.au)

[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)

<sup>2</sup> Renters and Housing Union, *Roofs for Ransom - 12 Month Report*, October 7, 2021, p. 4, [https://rahu.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/RAHU-Roofs\\_for\\_Ransom-Final.pdf](https://rahu.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/RAHU-Roofs_for_Ransom-Final.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Analysis & Policy Observatory, *Ending homelessness in Australia: an evidence and policy deep dive*, November 2021, <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2022-02/apo-nid315326.pdf>, p. xx.

<sup>4</sup> Kate Colvin, *PM, your plan to fix housing crisis should reach for the stars*, The Sydney Morning Herald, May 31, 2022, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/pm-your-plan-to-fix-housing-crisis-should-reach-for-the-stars-20220530-p5aph2.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Luke Henriques-Gomes, *Only three rental properties in Australia are affordable for singles on jobseeker – study*, The Guardian, April 29, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/apr/29/only-three-rental-properties-in-australia-are-affordable-for-singles-on-jobseeker-study>.

<sup>6</sup> Stephanie Convery, *Public housing waitlist in Victoria balloons by 55%: 'I'd never get anything, so why bother?*, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/may/21/public-housing-waitlist-in-victoria-balloons-by-55-id-never-get-anything-so-why-bother>.

