

## Labor's plan for social housing

A re-elected ACT Labor government will build on the biggest renewal of public housing since self government with a series of investments to improve social housing.

Labor will build a second 'Common Ground' in Dickson, close to services, job opportunities and the Northbourne Avenue corridor. We'll build more dedicated housing for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans and we'll continue with our program of providing new homes for our public housing tenants.

The original Common Ground in Gungahlin was established by Labor to provide long term, high quality housing options for people on low incomes; and a solution for people who experience chronic homelessness.

We will work with the Common Ground board and the local homelessness service sector to determine the best model and service approach, based on the Common Ground model of both public and affordable housing and partnerships between government, community and private sectors to help homeless Canberrans get a roof over their head.

The \$16 million project will see the building carefully designed, with extensive community consultation, to fit in with the surrounding built and natural environments.

ACT Labor will respond to the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with a second dedicated, culturally appropriate older persons housing complex.

ACT Labor will invest around \$4.4 million in the project, building on the success of the recently completed complex in Kambah and based again on close engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and broader community.

Labor will also continue the biggest renewal of public housing since self government – a \$550 million program replacing 1,288 dwellings home-for-home and creating 2,500 jobs in the process.

As well as tearing up the light rail contract and throwing away the asset recycling payment from the Commonwealth, the Liberals' approach to Northbourne Avenue would stop this housing renewal and stop the upgrade of public housing to more modern, efficient and accessible dwellings across the ACT.

ACT Labor recognises that a good secure home is fundamental to so many parts of life – school, work, good health, friendships, comfort, security and happiness. This is why successive Labor governments in the ACT have maintained what is the most significant social housing system in Australia, with around 30 dwellings per 1,000 people against a national average of 17 per 1,000.

As a result of our investment in homelessness services, the ACT has the lowest rate of homeless persons who are sleeping rough compared to other jurisdictions.

Building on the continued phasing out of stamp duty and the restructure of the Land Development Agency to focus on affordable greenfield land release, Labor will also develop a housing strategy in conjunction with key stakeholders from the housing, homelessness and property sectors. We will work together for ongoing improvements to the way we support those at risk of housing stress and report to the Legislative Assembly on progress. We'll also support the growth of the community housing sector in Canberra and work with higher education partners to increase the supply of student accommodation.

Labor will also keep working with the housing and homelessness sector, together with OneLink and the Supportive Tenancy Service on targeted initiatives, which support rental affordability and help individuals with specific housing needs.

Minister for Housing Yvette Berry said:

“Successive Labor governments in the ACT have restored our social housing stock from when the Liberals sold some 1,000 properties in government. We have provided homes for more than 22,000 people – we have kept them in public hands for the public good.

“One of the great strengths of Common Ground in Gunghalin was the way it came together with strong community support and many generous business contributions.

“We know this generosity will emerge again for a second Common Ground and Labor looks forward to working with the community on this new project.”

ACT Labor has also reiterated the need for greater certainty around future Commonwealth funding for homelessness services under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness which remains unfunded despite unanimous calls from state and territory housing ministers.

**Ends**