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From: Cr Holly Ewin [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 11 July 2019 3:16 PM
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The Secretary
House of Assembly Select Committee on Housing Affordability
Parliament of Tasmania

Housing is not a right, nor a privilege; it is a basic human need. When the cost of housing is so out of sync with wage growth, and the availability of homes is completely out of sync with demand, it is clear that the invisible hand of the market cannot regulate for complex human needs on something so simple as an economic algorithm. There is a huge body of growing evidence, both peer-reviewed, scientific studies and also anecdotally from people with lived experience that the extent of housing stress and homelessness in our community is massive- and growing. Unless there is a significant paradigm shift in the way we understand and provide for our community's housing needs, the housing crisis can be expected to worsen.

The Australian welfare model depends on pensioners owning their own home (Beer, Kearins and Pieters 2007, Yates and Bradbury 2010). People of my generation have well and truly kissed the dream of home ownership goodbye: so we are not only struggling to find rentals on the private market now, but are being set up to fail at the end of our working lives. Single women over 55 are the fastest growing cohort represented in homeless statistics for this very reason (lack of superannuation, no assets) (ACOSS 2016)-- overrepresentation in homeless statistics is not something anybody's looking for when we're talking about gender equality.

It is frustrating that service providers, professionals, researchers and those experiencing insecure, unaffordable and unsafe housing conditions and/or homelessness aren't being listened to. I'm not going to go into too much detail in the body of this submission, because I don't have the time; and frankly, the information is already known. We know exactly what the causes and conditions of the housing crisis are. We know that the erosion of our progressive taxation system has directly impacted the availability of social and affordable housing, and eroded the wrap-around services such as community and health support that we all rely on, to a point where our 'welfare' system does not provide welfare for vulnerable and marginalised people, but a demeaning, subsistent existence where people in our community are having to make life-and-death choices between things like buying groceries, turning on a heater or paying rent.

Based on the reference list below, which are all publicly available and relevant to the Australian and Tasmanian context, I have listed the recommendations which must be enacted to ensure the current and future housing needs for everyone in our community are met.

For all their complexity, the causes and impacts of the housing crisis are preventable and solvable. There is a huge body of peer-reviewed research on how Australia came to be in the midst of the housing crisis,

and what is needed to ensure all Australians have access to safe, secure, quality, appropriate and affordable housing. It is now up to you, as our leaders, to act.

Recommendations for implementation and advocacy:

1. Freeze rent prices, such as implemented in Berlin and other cities; to stop rent inflation overtaking (non-existent) wage growth (O'Sullivan 2019).
2. Hold all new applications for short stay accommodation, pending analysis of data from sharing platforms (Holder 2019).
 - a. Depending on data analysis, potential for more rigorous regulation.
1. Introduce vacancy tax for properties that are left empty for more than 6 months per year in urban centres and surrounds.
2. Inclusionary zoning- mandatory 20% on all new developments in metropolitan/urban areas must be reserved and developed as affordable housing (AHURI 2017).
3. Increase Rent Assistance payments to be commensurate with actual rental prices paid (Department of Human Services 2019).
4. Significantly increase public housing stock as a matter of urgency- the Premier is adamant more properties are being developed, but is at the same time selling off old stock (UTAS study, 2018).
 - a. There are obvious other elements required to meet this demand- such as investment in trades through TAFE, and addressing the wage gap between Tasmania and other states, which is a leading cause for skills shortages.
1. Conduct demand analysis research- as promised by the Housing Minister- to identify future needs for Tasmania's growing population (impacted by factors such as UTAS intake, FIFO workers, interstate and international migration, climate change, etc.).

I will just reiterate that none of the information or recommendations within this submission are new. Academics, service providers and the community have all been saying these things for years. We are a wealthy nation, and we have the capacity to be resilient, cohesive and kind in the face of social, environmental and technological challenges. Please, can we do better?

In solidarity for policy and change,

Holly Ewin.

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In solidarity for policy and change,

Holly Ewin

(they/them)

Hobart City Councillor



City of **HOBART**

I acknowledge and pay my respect to the Mouhineener people, the traditional owners of the stolen land on which I live, work and play. Sovereignty never ceded. Treaty now.



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