

Frequently Asked Questions

November 2010

Transfer of ownership to community housing

What does it mean that the NSW Government is transferring ownership of social housing to community housing providers?

Currently Housing NSW leases properties to not for profit community housing providers to provide social housing for lower income households in NSW. Transferring ownership means that community housing providers will own the properties that they manage.

The social housing properties transferred will include a proportion of homes already under community housing management and the majority of homes built under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan.

While the NSW Government will no longer own the properties, Housing NSW will continue to retain an interest in the properties to ensure that people in need continue to be housed.

Why is the NSW Government transferring ownership of social housing to community housing providers?

The transfer of ownership to community housing providers will support community housing providers to deliver more affordable housing – this will assist in meeting the NSW Government's State Plan priority to improve housing affordability.

By owning the properties they manage, community housing providers can use the assets to borrow funds from the private sector to invest in more housing. Over the long term, transferring ownership to community housing providers will increase the supply of affordable rental housing available for lower income people. This will have a multiplier effect - the more housing

the providers own, the more they can borrow to develop or buy housing to improve housing affordability in NSW.

This reform is a key part of the NSW Government's agenda for community housing. The Government has set a target to grow community housing to 30,000 homes by 2016 – this reform will help to meet and exceed this target.

Is this happening in any other place in Australia?

Yes, as part of the national reform agenda for social housing an increasing supply of social housing will be managed and owned by the not for profit community housing sector. The Commonwealth Government has set a requirement that a significant majority of the new social housing funded through the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan is managed and owned by community housing providers.

What impact will this have on social housing applicants and tenants?

The change in ownership will not impact on who is housed. Community housing providers will continue to be required to comply with Housing NSW policies for community housing on eligibility, access and rent. This will ensure that people with priority housing needs continue to be housed.

The community housing providers will also be subject to regulation by the independent regulator, the Registrar of Community Housing. A key focus of the regulatory system is ensuring fair and transparent practices are undertaken by community housing providers and appropriate tenancy arrangements are in place. This provides further assurance that

community housing tenants will continue to receive high quality housing services.

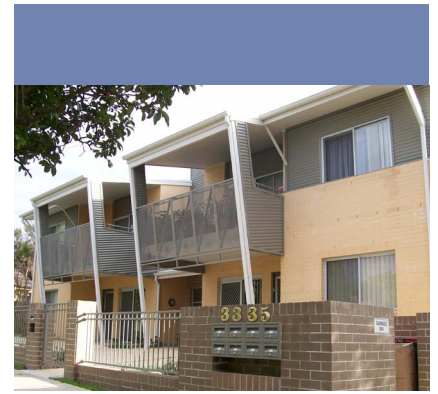
Why focus on supporting the growth of community housing providers?

The NSW Government is committed to developing a viable not for profit community housing sector to complement public housing and the private rental market. Community housing plays an important role as it provides social housing for priority needs clients as well those on more moderate incomes whose housing needs cannot be met in the private rental market.

As non government providers, community housing organisations can also offer more innovative and cost effective ways to deliver new housing supply. Community housing providers are effective at partnering with government, the private sector and other non government organisations to provide more housing and support more sustainable and mixed communities. Community housing providers have already been partners in major projects which have seen some communities renewed through improvements to the physical and built environments and provision of better services and opportunities for residents.

What evidence has this decision been based on?

Housing NSW has commissioned a number of independent studies to provide advice on the merits of transferring ownership to community housing providers including a detailed analysis of the costs and benefits in comparison to existing leasing arrangements and extended long term leases. The studies found that the transfer of ownership provided



Frequently Asked questions

November 2010

Transfer of ownership to community housing

the government, community housing providers and the community with the greatest benefit.

Will all community housing providers own the properties they manage?

No, only selected community housing providers will hold title to government funded social housing properties. These providers will be selected on the basis of their experience in managing a large portfolio of properties and providing support to high needs tenancies as well as their commitment and capacity to borrow money for investment in new housing supply.

How will the NSW Government ensure that the housing will not be sold and that tenants are protected?

The NSW Government will have in place an appropriate framework before ownership is transferred to community housing providers. This

framework will include ongoing regulatory oversight under the new regulatory system administered by the Registrar of Community Housing, binding contractual agreements, and new statutory provisions under the *Housing Act 2001*.

Providers will be subject to the highest levels of ongoing regulatory oversight and will be monitored to ensure they continue to provide high quality services to tenants and that government funded assets are prudently managed. Contractual arrangements will stipulate adherence to Housing NSW policies for community housing including tenant eligibility, access and rent provisions. New statutory provisions will also allow Housing NSW to retain an ongoing interest in any property where ownership is transferred. This will restrict sale or redevelopment of the properties without consent.

When will the properties be transferred?

The first transfer of ownership is planned to take place once an appropriate framework is established, including new legislative provisions set out in the *Housing Act 2001*.

It is illegal for an officer of Housing NSW to ask for money or favours or other benefits of any kind in exchange for helping you with your housing needs.

It is also illegal for you or anyone else to offer money or favours or other benefits of any kind to an officer of Housing NSW in exchange for helping you. If you have any information regarding this, please contact Business Assurance on 1300 HOUSING (1300 468 746). Housing NSW may refuse the provision of further housing services to anyone who has engaged or sought to engage in corrupt or illegal conduct.

Translation service

Arabic	خدمة الترجمة الخطية والشفهية المجانية اتصل على الرقم 131 450
Chinese	免費的翻譯傳譯服務 致電 131 450
Russian	Служба бесплатного письменного и устного перевода Позвоните по номеру 131 450
Spanish	Servicio Gratuito de Traducción e Interpretación Llame al 131 450
Vietnamese	Dịch vụ Phiên dịch và Thông dịch Miễn phí Điện thoại 131 450