Submission to the 'Reforms to Human Services Issues Paper' of the Productivity Commission *Inquiry into Introducing Competition and Informed User Choice into Human Services*

February 2017

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Who we are

For nearly 40 years, Jesuit Social Services has worked to build a just society by advocating for social change and promoting the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged young people, families and the community.

Jesuit Social Services works where the need is greatest and where it has the capacity, experience and skills to make the most difference. Jesuit Social Services values all persons and seeks to engage with them in a respectful way, that acknowledges their experiences and skills and gives them the opportunity to harness their full potential.

We do this by working directly to address disadvantage and by influencing hearts and minds for social change. We strengthen and build respectful, constructive relationships for:

- **Effective services** – by partnering with people most in need and those who support them to address disadvantage
- **Education** – by providing access to life-long learning and development
- **Capacity building** – by refining and evaluating our practice and sharing and partnering for greater impact
- **Advocacy** – by building awareness of injustice and advocating for social change based on grounded experience and research
- **Leadership development** – by partnering across sectors to build expertise and commitment for justice.

The promotion of **education, lifelong learning and capacity building** is fundamental to all our activity. We believe this is the most effective means of helping people to reach their potential and exercise their full citizenship. This, in turn, strengthens the broader community.

Our service delivery and advocacy focuses on the following key areas:

- **Justice and crime prevention** – people involved with the justice system
- **Mental health and wellbeing** – people with multiple and complex needs and those affected by suicide, trauma and complex bereavement
- **Settlement and community building** – recently arrived immigrants and refugees and disadvantaged communities
- **Education, training and employment** – people with barriers to sustainable employment.

Our direct services and volunteer programs are located in Victoria, New South Wales and Northern Territory. In Victoria we work with people in the justice system through our Brosnan Services supporting people exiting prison and youth justice facilities. This includes the Corrections Victoria Reintegration Program in North and West Metropolitan Melbourne (Reconnect), the African Australian Community Transition (AACT) Program, Next Steps and Perry House residential programs, the Youth Justice Community Support Service, Group Conferencing and Individual Support Program.

We also provide a range of other programs in areas such as mental health and complex needs, housing, supporting migrants and refugees through settlement services, as well as providing education and training programs through Jesuit Community College.

In NSW we work with newly arrived migrants, and in Western Sydney we deliver social enterprise and other community building initiatives that provide affordable food, training and employment opportunities. In the Northern Territory we work with Aboriginal communities providing capacity building activities.

Introduction

Jesuit Social Services welcomes the opportunity to comment on the *Reforms to Human Services Issues Paper* of the Productivity Commission's *Inquiry into introducing competition and informed user choice into human services.*

We also welcome a number of the key points and findings outlined in the Commission's *Study Report* from November 2016. In particular, the recognition that greater competition, contestability and informed user choice could improve outcomes in many, but not all, human services is an important perspective that should underpin the final analysis, findings and recommendations made by the Commission.

Additionally, we are pleased the Commission has increasingly understood the significance and impact of government stewardship on human services provision, and its influence on user and community outcomes. We affirm the *Study Report* in specifically highlighting the responsibility of government in:

- ensuring quality and equity standards are met
- providing people the support they need to make choices
- enforcing consumer safeguards
- driving continual improvement of service provision.

These four points will be pivotal in the successful implementation of any reforms that may ultimately be adopted by Governments across Australia. As we have argued in previous submissions to this Inquiry, simply leaving human services provision open to traditional market conditions will not automatically deliver the expected improvements in efficiency and user outcomes that the government is seeking. Government stewardship is particularly vital in 'guiding' a market-oriented approach.

In our submission to the *Preliminary Findings* we outlined our guiding principles, which we believe should inform any changes to human services provision. It is appropriate that we reiterate these principles as the Commission now seeks to outline a path and process to achieve sustainable, efficient and effective reform.

- What matters in any reform is the good of the people who are served. Financial savings and administrative simplicity are only a means to that end.
- The more actively people and providers are involved in planning programs designed for their benefit, the better. This participation will work only if it is based in community and human relationships, not simply in impersonal, narrow processes of individual choice.
- The primacy given to the market requires constant evaluation and scrutiny. Market competition often reduces competition by creating economies of scale, generating savings in order to undercut competitors, the shaping of proposals to exclude care for people who require more intensive or complex support, and of treating people as customers rather than as people with needs. Those with more complex needs are often excluded as a result of cheaper wages and a less skilled workforce. Quality of relationship is not easily measured, still less marketed, but should be central in the selection of organisations to deliver services.
- In implementing reforms, government must maintain its responsibilities to people in need, and not transfer this responsibility to the market. In practice this means retaining and bolstering the

resources for scrutinising bids, monitoring performance and undertaking effective evaluation – all underpinned by wisdom gained from engagement with people who are being supported.
- It may require more – rather than less – government expenditure.

Our submission focuses on three of the identified areas for reform – human services in remote Indigenous communities, grant-based family and community services, and social housing.

Recommendations

Concerning **human services in remote Indigenous communities**, we call on Governments to:
- strengthen formal Indigenous representation in key governance roles and bodies which have a direct impact on decision making and priority setting in Indigenous communities
- prioritise and invest in building local capacity (including leadership and community development) to enable ATSI people to inform planning and sustainably manage services offered to individuals and groups within their communities
- increase the proportion of service delivery carried out by local organisations and Aboriginal community-controlled providers.

Concerning **grant-based family and community services**, we call on Governments to:
- pursue a concerted effort to improve co-design and an integrated approach between government and service providers and service users
- introduce and strengthen mechanisms to facilitate meaningful engagement of service users in service design, planning, commissioning and evaluation
- improve flexibility and longevity of funding and contract arrangements in order to remove current uncertainty and barriers for not-for-profit providers
- evaluate and disseminate practice learnings amongst stakeholders in order to enable innovation and better outcomes.

To underpin reforms in **social housing**, we call on Governments to:
- invest in a diversity of housing options for people with multiple and complex needs (including head-leasing and housing first initiatives to assist people who face barriers entering the private rental market or accessing social housing; and expanding supported housing options for people who do not have adequate independent living skills and/or require supported living arrangements) and provide incentives for social housing providers to offer housing to complex and high support participants.
- better integrate and streamline public and social housing systems to make it easier for people to access and navigate, including better coordination between statutory housing bodies and support services, and implementing common processes (e.g. eligibility and wait list management) across Australia
- strengthen and make consistent financial incentives (such as increasing the allowance for tenancy management) across the public and social housing sectors to ensure that people with high support needs are not disadvantaged
- introduce specific housing initiatives for singles and young people with high and complex support needs (including experience of trauma)
- immediately increase capital funds to develop new housing stock, along with investment for housing support to enable people to maintain their tenancy

- leverage capital through partnerships with the for-profit sector based on the development of Common Ground models of housing and support across Australia (with Grocon)
- introduce and strengthen measures (such as eligibility criteria and safeguards/regulations) to protect social housing households, especially for vulnerable groups presenting with challenging behaviours
- create more opportunities for tenants and community sector providers to have a voice and actively participate in the process of designing the social housing system and informing ongoing improvements
- strengthen incentives for the private sector to invest in social housing
- develop a Commonwealth Affordable/Social Housing strategy.

Human services in remote Indigenous communities

We note the Inquiry is seeking specific and detailed information on various aspects of current service provision in Indigenous communities and the way in which reform priorities may be pursued and implemented. Jesuit Social Services wishes to reiterate that while reform of service provision is in itself a positive and necessary undertaking, it is vital to look beyond the stated goals and intention of this Inquiry to once again acknowledge the underlying issue at the heart of Indigenous communities – addressing entrenched disadvantage through place-based approaches and empowering local communities.

In 2015, Jesuit Social Services along with Catholic Social Services Australia released the findings of its fourth *Dropping off the Edge 2015* Report (DOTE)[1], which found that complex and entrenched disadvantage continues to be experienced by a small but persistent number of locations in each state and territory across Australia.

A number of Indigenous communities across Australia experience persistent and entrenched disadvantage. A new approach is needed so we don't continue to fail the communities that bear the greatest burden of disadvantage. A sustained long-term commitment across the government, community and business sectors is urgently required to resolve this complex problem.

Of particular concern for Jesuit Social Services is the dispersion of significant disadvantage across the entire Northern Territory, which has a high ATSI population. The patterns of disadvantage vary greatly across the Territory, with some areas showing low levels of disadvantage on certain indicators and high levels of disadvantage on others. Our DOTE 2015 research found that different areas experience disadvantage in vastly different ways; for example:
- In the Tiwi Islands, disadvantage is felt in the lack of internet access, low family incomes and young adults not engaged in work or study - ranked first on all of these indicators. Economic indicators therefore showed disadvantage while social indicators (criminal convictions, prison admissions) were less prominent.
- East Arnhem ranked second on unemployment and long-term unemployment, young adults not engaged in work or study, unskilled workers, and the level of post-school qualifications. Again, the issue is around income and skills.
- In Katherine, disadvantage is reflected in the rankings for criminal convictions, domestic violence and prison admissions (ranked first on each of these). On the other hand, skills appear to be at a higher level than in many other locations.

While disadvantage is shown in different forms across the Territory, certain localities account for a disproportionate level of disadvantage, with only one Statistical Local Area showing no extreme

disadvantage on any indicator. Our research found that 25 per cent of locations accounted for 47 per cent of the highest disadvantage rankings. These findings highlight both the complexity and persistence of locational disadvantage in the Northern Territory.

Jesuit Social Services has consistently argued that public policy must pay greater attention to the role of structural factors and social inequality as key determinants of health and wellbeing. These factors are key drivers of demand for community services.

In addition to addressing structural determinants, the Government must also tackle disadvantage through the provision of services. Here investment must be forward looking and preventative. In order to do this we need effective, targeted universal services in education, health and family services, as well as access to safe and affordable housing (along with support where required). We must respond to people who fall through the cracks, and provide holistic interventions during times of crisis. And, fundamentally, we need to commit to long-term, local, community-led solutions in areas of deepest disadvantage.

Engaging and empowering communities

In respect to the Requests for Information (RFI) in the Issues Paper, our comments in relation to human services in remote Indigenous communities pertain to RFI Numbers 35 to 37.

In order to tackle entrenched disadvantage and improve outcomes from service provision, efforts must be focused on two key areas, which are intrinsically linked:

1. A multi-layered, cooperative and coordinated strategy that is owned and driven by the community.
2. Place-based structures, plans and resources targeted to our most vulnerable communities to effectively break the web of disadvantage.

As the *Issues Paper* states, it is not feasible for user choice models to be properly implemented in many Indigenous communities (particularly remote ones). The most effective mechanism for improving the responsiveness of services and effectiveness of outcomes is to increase the involvement of, and control by, communities and locally-based organisations in the planning, coordination and provision of services. The degree to which this is facilitated will determine the success of any future reforms.

There is considerable scope for this to occur across the entire lifecycle of service provision. The most obvious avenue is through collaborative co-design of services, with an emphasis on place-based approaches.

In order to move towards a co-design approach, the marginalisation of Indigenous people in decision making must be addressed. The clear lack of formal Indigenous representation – as outlined in a 2012 report from the Office of the Northern Territory Coordinator-General for Remote Services – in key governance roles that lead decision making and priority setting in Indigenous communities fundamentally limits community empowerment at the highest strategic levels, and is replicated all the way down to the community level. In the Northern Territory, this loss of control at the strategic level stretches back to such events as the abolition of ATSIC, the centralisation of local government administration into urban areas and the proliferation of 'advisory committees' in place of elected Aboriginal decision-making bodies.

To increase community-level involvement, formal governance structures which enhance local decision making power from communities need to be implemented. As a first step, strengthening formal Indigenous representation in key governance roles and bodies which have a direct impact on decision making and priority setting in Indigenous communities is crucial. Doing so would place Indigenous communities and

their concerns on the same footing as government and service providers in sector-wide service planning and design, offering the opportunity for the Indigenous voice to be re-established.

Via formal participation in governance structures, a commitment to 'control' and 'culture' – the control over life circumstances, social inclusion and the encouragement of cultural diversity – can be fostered in government policy to empower participation at the local community level.

> **We call on Governments to strengthen formal Indigenous representation in key governance roles and bodies which have a direct impact on decision making and priority setting in Indigenous communities.**

In order to support communities to have a greater role in service planning, a commitment to community control alone will not be enough. Investment in building local capacity (i.e. such as leadership development, engagement and community development) to enable ATSI people to inform planning and sustainably manage their own services needs to be offered to individuals and groups within communities. This means understanding the long term workforce needs of communities and their local organisations, and not relying on non-Indigenous providers who compete with Indigenous organisations.

With high unemployment in remote areas there is a significant opportunity to provide targeted training and support, which will have the twofold impact of building the skills and expertise needed to lead service planning and provision from within the community, and offer employment opportunities. Additionally, this can have a positive impact on staff retention, which can be difficult in remote communities, by building a home grown workforce.

Research by The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy sums up the benefits of placing governance control in community hands and the necessity for capacity building initiatives to occur:

> The delivery and funding of governance capacity development remains a *d hoc*, poorly coordinated, poorly funded and poorly monitored. The research confirms that where a facilitated, community development approach is taken to Indigenous governance development, greater progress is made in creating sustained capacity and legitimacy. Indigenous skills, abilities, knowledge and leadership are mobilised and most effectively exercised when initiatives are Indigenous-driven, towards Indigenous goals. Building the institutions (rules) for governance is an essential foundation. Governance is greatly strengthened when Indigenous people create their own rules, policies, guidelines and codes, as well as design the mechanisms for enforcing those rules and holding leaders accountable. The effectiveness of Indigenous-designed rules and procedures is greatest when their legitimacy is derived from local cultural realities and they also support organisations to get things done and gain external confidence.[2]

> **We call on Governments to prioritise and invest in building local capacity (including leadership and community development) to enable ATSI people to inform planning and sustainably manage services offered to individuals and groups within their communities.**

Increasing the proportion of service delivery carried out by local organisations and Aboriginal community-controlled providers will also help positively balance the responsiveness of services with accountability to those who fund them.

Currently, a large proportion of service delivery in remote communities (e.g. early childhood, youth and family support) is outsourced to third party non-Indigenous organisations whose accountability to funders and understanding of the communities they work in can be limited. Funds are being diverted to build the capital base and operational capacity of non-local agencies rather than funding and building the skills and capabilities of local Indigenous people and organisations. In channelling resources into Indigenous organisations, responsiveness of services will be better targeted as a result of the improved planning and design outlined above, and by virtue of their enhanced ownership in improving outcomes in their communities. In this instance, accountability to those who fund the services, while not assumed to be automatic, will be enhanced as a result of the cyclical nature of involving Indigenous people in setting policy priorities and service planning, and increasing the delivery of services by Indigenous organisations with a natural stake in ensuring outcomes are achieved in their communities in order to guarantee the flow of future funding.

> **We call on Governments to increase the proportion of service delivery carried out by local organisations and Aboriginal community-controlled providers.**

Grant-based family and community services

The commissioning and delivery of human services must be underpinned by sector coordination, collaborative co-design and planning, robust government contracting and compliance processes and a commitment to evaluating and understanding community need.

Fostering collaboration

In this context we believe reform must focus on ensuring greater collaborative co-design and an integrated approach between government and service providers, one which aims to improve sector coordination, reduce fragmentation, and improve planning and design.

The transition to an integrated and collaborative approach to delivering services must occur at two levels: the strategic policy domain and the practical delivery of services. At the strategic policy level this has begun to take shape to varying degrees through increased co-design, but in order for it to be successful it must become ingrained and systematic in how the sector works. It needs to be a deliberate re-orientation led by government. Market principles have very little, if anything, to do with this aspect of reform. Increased competition and contestability may introduce more service providers, but it will not organically initiate or embed improved sector coordination or co-design. Increased coordination and co-design must be intentionally driven by an official promotion by government of the involvement of service providers at the strategic policy level in such areas as policy development, design and evaluation (in addition to their traditional service delivery role). It must target cohorts and communities in greatest need – not just based on financial expediency.

Co-design must be founded upon interdependence amongst key stakeholders – government and agencies – reflected in the shared 'control', 'responsibility', 'ownership' and 'risk' of service delivery.[3] It also necessitates a role for the service user in contributing to sector coordination, planning and design. Just as ownership and inclusion of the community are highlighted as critical to delivering strong outcomes in remote Indigenous communities, the same can be said for family and community services more broadly.

Both governments and agencies need to commit to empowering service users in the planning, design and delivery of services. This should occur through direct and indirect avenues of consultation, feedback and representation at key forums. One example of this may be in undertaking needs analysis assessments. As the ultimate recipients of services, users should be consulted on the needs and drivers of a particular service in their community, as well as the mix of intervention strategies that respond to this need.

Fostering greater co-design between governments, agencies and service users is essential to improving planning, coordination and service delivery – ultimately improving outcomes and innovative responses. As previously mentioned, the inherent discouragement that occurs when competition principles are applied can work against improved co-design. Providers may be guarded and disincentivised to come together and share learning for fear of losing a competitive advantage, and also inhibiting sector-wide innovation.

Limits of current contract and funding arrangements

The Commission acknowledges that competitive tendering and contracting is currently not incentivising innovation and creativity in service provision and improved outcomes. This may be due to a range of reasons referred to in the *Preliminary Findings*, including timeframes for tendering and the burden created by the cycle of reapplying for funding.

Our main concern here is around funding levels limited contract terms and their inflexibility. Ultimately, these factors create uncertainty for not-for-profit providers, stifle innovation within the sector, and hinder service provision and outcomes.

Levels of funding are crucial to ensuring genuine choice (as major issues arise where resources are not available to provide genuine choices for service users[4]), and diverse funding streams are required to avoid disruption to users should a service or program cease or be wound back due to funding pressures.

Governments also need to stabilise the policy settings in which decisions are made and funding is allocated in a move to create continuity and a long-term economic commitment to achieving outcomes through service provision. This, coupled with greater flexibility in terms of compliance and contractual conditions, will help foster innovation and diversity of service options over time. Of course, innovation and contractual flexibility need to be framed within a context of minimum standards and an overarching outcomes framework, which in turn needs to be set and maintained. Collaboration and co-design must underpin this approach at a strategic level.

Monitoring and evaluation framework

Understanding and evaluating community need, including monitoring how current services provision is performing, is strongly supported by Jesuit Social Services. We have a tradition and commitment to evidence-based program delivery, having built up significant capabilities and expertise in this area over time. A strong evidence-base should form the basis of any policy or sector planning.

While government is well placed to lead on the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework, it should form part of co-design mechanisms so that providers have input into the design of any systematic framework. It is vital that any enforced reporting requirements do not add another layer of time and labour-intensive activity for service providers, who may need to allocate significant human and financial resources. This may impact the actual task of providing adequate services. Informal program and outcomes feedback should be considered just as useful as any systematic mechanisms, and should increasingly occur through greater interaction between government and service providers.

Program participants must be involved in co-designing commissioning arrangements, and advising at every stage of the cycle. Meaningful consultation with people with a lived experience of engaging with human services can make a vital difference to the responsiveness of these services, and provide critical insight into how to design for successful outcomes.

Ultimately, without a clear picture of what the needs are of users and communities, governments are hindered in carrying out their 'steering' responsibilities and knowing where gaps exist that could be addressed through greater innovation. Likewise, service providers, while recognising gaps in their own work, may not be aware of how this looks at a broader sectoral level leading to inefficiencies in service provision and poor outcomes. An improved effort by government to evaluate and disseminate practice learnings will enable innovation and better outcomes.

> **We call on Governments to:**
>
> - **Pursue a concerted effort to improve co-design and an integrated approach between government and service providers and service users**
> - **Introduce and strengthen mechanisms to facilitate meaningful engagement of service users in service design, planning, commissioning and evaluation.**
> - **Improve flexibility and longevity of funding and contract arrangements in order to remove current uncertainty and barriers for not-for-profit providers.**
> - **Evaluate and disseminate practice learnings amongst stakeholders in order to enable innovation and better outcomes.**

Social housing

The availability of safe, secure and stable housing is a major issue for many in our community, but particularly for people with mental illness, alcohol and drug problems, and other complex needs. We know that 30 per cent of people exiting prison do so into homelessness[5], while a University of NSW study on multiple and complex needs found those with complex needs experience greater homelessness and housing disadvantage.[6] Working with young people in the justice system and exiting out of home care, we know that a small number of young people remain incarcerated given the lack of access to a home.

Homelessness services provide varying levels of housing advice, accommodation and support. While these services provide critical interventions for people with temporary housing crisis or less complex underlying issues, they also must operate in an environment where resources are limited and there are significant barriers to building a highly skilled workforce. These pressures mean that they often struggle to support the small but significant number of people in the community with a combination of complex needs and challenging behaviours that put them at heightened risk of prolonged homelessness, social exclusion and of contact with the justice system, such as women and families fleeing domestic violence, people leaving prison and young people leaving out-of-home care.

 A barrier for people finding stable housing can be entry into the private rental market. Particularly for women and families fleeing domestic violence, young people on low incomes with no tenancy history or people leaving prison, the lack of rental history and financial barriers can prevent access to the housing market. Financial barriers can often prevent young people accessing both the private market and social housing. Very few social housing providers accommodate young people as their financial modelling does not cater for people on low incomes.

Lacking independent living skills can also be a barrier to maintaining stable accommodation. Many young people leaving care, or young people leaving the justice system, have not yet developed the independent living skills necessary for stable accommodation. For this cohort, transitional, supported housing, with case support and after-hours workers, is central to a pathway to stable, independent living. Without intensive support to access and sustain appropriate forms of housing, many of these people will continue to experience homelessness or housing stress, and will have contact with other acute services in the community.

Investment is needed in housing and support packages that aim to stabilise housing and build social inclusion. Our research and experience have shown that secure and stable accommodation, coupled with assistance to sustain housing and build capabilities, can enable people with complex needs to maintain their housing and more productively participate in the community.[7]

To meet the varying needs of society's most vulnerable people, a diversity of housing options is critical. Options include transitional, supported living arrangements such as residential programs, lead tenant housing, step down models, and approaches that support individuals' entry into the private housing market through housing first models and head-leasing.[1] It is also important to consider housing options through a gendered lens to ensure women have access to safe, secure, long-term housing.

> **To underpin any reforms in social housing, we call on Governments to invest in a diversity of housing options for people with multiple and complex needs including:**
> - **head-leasing and housing first initiatives to assist people who face barriers entering the private rental market or accessing social housing**
> - **expanding supported housing options for people who do not have adequate independent living skills and/or require supported living arrangements**
> - **incentives for social housing providers to offer housing to complex and high support participants.**

In relation to the Commission's areas of focus concerning social housing, we note the following:

- The social housing system is fragmented and further effort is required to streamline processes to ensure better access, more choice, and easier navigation of the service system. We support current reforms such as the integrated Victorian Housing Register, and call for the introduction of similar initiatives across Australia.
- Very few social housing providers accommodate individuals or families with complex needs because their financial modelling (based on incentives in current policy settings) do not cater for people on low incomes. In this context we must introduce or strengthen incentives for public and social housing agencies to provide housing for people with multiple and complex needs. While social housing providers have a weighting/allowance for more intensive tenancy management to

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[1] **Lead tenant** is an out-of-home care placement option providing medium-term accommodation and support to young people aged 16-18 years, who have been placed away from the care of their families by Child Protection (Source: DHHS, Victorian Government). **Head-leasing** occurs when a social housing provider leases a property from a landlord in the private rental market and then subleases it to a person requiring housing assistance. Based on the understanding that housing is a right, the **Housing First model** secures housing as a first step to addressing social issues. It is similar to a head-leasing arrangement, however the individual has no requirement to engage in support services and the housing is permanent.

assist people with challenging behaviour, there remains a lack of resources to manage this group (e.g. support to respond to anti-social behaviour, negotiate with other providers, etc.).

- Current arrangements, including the eligibility criteria and the type and level of assistance, do not enable equitable access to social housing, with the most vulnerable cohorts continuing to miss out on housing and support.
- It is important that tenancy management is offered as distinct from housing support services that assist tenants to maintain their tenancy (particularly when both are delivered by the same provider). This helps ensure that support is driven by a therapeutic and not tenancy management approach.
- Long term and ongoing support is required to enable community participation for people with complex needs. For this group social participation is achievable, however economic participation may not be, and therefore movement out of social or public housing is in some cases not attainable. Even so, increased social participation (underpinned by stable provision of social housing and support) has broader benefits in terms of reducing the impacts on the service system (such as less contact with the criminal justice system, emergency departments or mental health services).
- While the Social Housing Initiative provided a welcome injection of funds for new stock, investment in capital was not accompanied by adequate investment in support services to assist people to find and maintain tenancy.

We call on Governments to:

- **Better integrate and streamline public and social housing systems to make it easier for people to access and navigate, including better coordination between statutory housing bodies and support services, and implementing common processes (e.g. eligibility and wait list management) across Australia**
- **Strengthen and make consistent financial incentives (such as increasing the allowance for tenancy management) across the public and social housing sectors to ensure that people with high support needs are not disadvantaged**
- **Introduce specific housing initiatives for singles and young people with high and complex support needs (including experience of trauma)**
- **Immediately increase capital funds to develop new housing stock, along with investment for housing support to enable people to maintain their tenancy**
- **Leverage capital through partnerships with the for-profit sector based on the development of Common Ground models of housing and support across Australia (with Grocon)**
- **Introduce and strengthen measures (such as eligibility criteria and safeguards/regulations) to protect social housing households, especially for vulnerable groups presenting with challenging behaviours**
- **Create more opportunities for tenants and community sector providers to have a voice and actively participate in the process of designing the social housing system and informing ongoing improvements**
- **Strengthen incentives for the private sector to invest in social housing**
- **Develop a Commonwealth Affordable/Social Housing strategy.**

[1] Vinson, T & Rawsthorne, M (2015), *Dropping off the Edge 2015*, Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia, http://www.dote.org.au/findings/full-report/

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[3] Productivity Commission (2010). *Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector: Research Report*. February, Canberra.

[4] Davidson, P. (2011). Did 'Work First' Work? The Role of Employment Assistance Programs in Reducing Long-Term Unemployment in Australia (1990-2008). *Australian Bulletin of Labour*, 51-96.

[5] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2016, The health of Australia's prisoners 2015. Cat. no. PHE 207, AIHW, Canberra. http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129553682

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[6] Baldry, E, Dowse, L, McCausland, R & Clarence, M 2012, *Life course of institutional costs of homelessness of vulnerable groups*, Report to FaHCSI. https://www.mhdcd.unsw.edu.au/sites/www.mhdcd.unsw.edu.au/files/u18/Lifecourse-Institutional-Costs-of-Homelessness-final-report.pdf

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