



ACT
Shelter

MEDIA RELEASE

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ACT Shelter backs inclusion of the right to housing in Human Rights Act

ACT Shelter has welcomed the introduction of a bill to enshrine the right to housing in the ACT Human Rights Act, which if passed by the ACT's Legislative Assembly would make the ACT the first jurisdiction in Australia to recognise housing as a human right in law.

"We need to treat housing as a human right, not a commodity," said Ms Corinne Dobson, CEO of ACT Shelter. "Housing is fundamental to the realisation of other human rights, and having a home is the foundation for a life of dignity and opportunity.

"ACT Shelter has long called for the right to housing to be included in our human rights act. This reform isn't just symbolic – it's a practical tool that will help us shape a more inclusive housing system and hold decision-makers to account."

The Bill, tabled today in the Legislative Assembly by the ACT Greens, would require future legislation to demonstrate compliance with the right to housing, and mandate the government and its agencies to consider the right to housing when developing policies and practices and making discretionary decisions.

With the critical shortage of affordable housing and unacceptably long waiting times for public housing, Ms Dobson noted the right to safe, affordable and appropriate housing is not currently a reality for all Canberrans.

"Frontline community services hear every day from people who are struggling to find a home they can afford, or who are living in substandard conditions.

"The current housing and homelessness crisis has been decades in the making. While legislating a right to housing will not solve the housing crisis overnight, it will be an important step forward and a strong foundation for developing a long-term, whole-of-government approach to ensuring access to housing progressively improves into the future.

"ACT Shelter urges the Legislative Assembly to pass this Bill and stands ready to work collaboratively with government, housing providers, and the wider community sector to ensure the right to housing becomes a lived reality for all Canberrans," said Ms Dobson.

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ACT Shelter is a not-for-profit peak body providing an informed and independent voice on housing policy issues affecting the ability of Canberrans on low, moderate or no incomes to have an affordable, safe and secure home.