

Timely attention to housing maintenance in Canberra welcomed

Three ACT peak bodies advocating for improved housing for low-income and vulnerable Canberrans have welcomed the release of a report by the ACT Ombudsman today which highlights the need for improvements to ACT Housing modifications.

The ACT Ombudsman report has found that Housing ACT tenants have been left waiting in unsafe and hazardous housing conditions for extended periods of time due to poor communication between Housing ACT, tenants and contractors.

Between July 2024 and November 2025, the Ombudsman received multiple complaints from Housing ACT tenants about their requests for repairs or maintenance, alongside media reports of people living in properties posing life-threatening concerns.

ACT Shelter, Advocacy for Inclusion and ACTCOSS welcome the report and increased focus and attention to housing modification and rectification work.

ACT Shelter CEO Corinne Dobson said:

“The Ombudsman’s report lays bare a deeply troubling reality, with public housing tenants left living in unsafe and unacceptable conditions for months, and without clear communication or accountability. People are not asking for diamond-plated jacuzzies – this is about meeting basic requests to address bathrooms and ceilings with black mould, doors that will not open, and housing that is unsafe or unhealthy.

“Housing ACT is the Territory’s largest landlord, and it has clear legal and ethical responsibilities to ensure homes are safe and properly maintained. ACT Shelter believes the Ombudsman’s recommendations must now be implemented fully and transparently to restore confidence and ensure tenants are treated with the respect they deserve.”

AFI’s Head of Policy Craig Wallace said:

“We have been highlighting issues with the timing, sequency and quality of modification work since well before it was revealed that the ACT had missed out on large sums of money that could have been accessed through Specialist Disability Accommodation for some housing needs.

“We have reports of people waiting months for bathroom renovations and minor physical works, like the removal of a small internal step, which would enable them to feel safe at home. Disabled people are not wanting Grand Designs but they are wanting modifications and also to know about access to basic comforts like air-conditioning. Some people are living in ghastly conditions – this can happen slowly but also tips into crisis.”

ACTCOSS CEO Devin Bowles said:

“Safety, and housing and home are two of the themes in the ACT government’s wellbeing indicators which are designed to drive investment responses.

“As we head towards the ACT Budget we are joining with peak bodies like ACT Shelter and AFI to call for timely, adequate and sustained improvements to the time it takes to complete modifications and rectification work for all Housing ACT tenants – especially those which are necessary to ensure someone can stay in their home. Improving the social housing system is a focus of our Budget submission for 26/27.”

For more information or comment, please contact:

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Corinne Dobson, CEO, ACT Shelter, 0478 989 638.

Dr Devin Bowles, CEO, ACTCOSS, on 0413 435 080.

AFI’s Head of Policy will also be reflecting on the report when he addresses the National Shelter Council tomorrow (5 March 2026).

ACTCOSS advocates for social justice in the ACT and represents not-for-profit community organisations. Follow us @ACTCOSS on X, Facebook and Instagram.

[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.

Advocacy for Inclusion (AFI), incorporating People with Disabilities ACT, is a Disabled People’s Organisation providing systemic advocacy and informed by individual and self-advocacy work across the ACT. AFI’s policy positions are grounded in lived experience and co-designed with our community, and its work is guided by the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.