



January 2024

## **Housing stress is predominantly experienced by women**

BPW Australia (the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women) is urging the Federal Government, together with State and Territory and Local governments, to deliver a housing plan that recognises the burden of housing stress is disproportionately borne by women.

Numerous studies have identified that homelessness impacts women, particularly single and older women, at a greater rate than men.

Gillian Lewis, BPW Australia President, commends the Federal government for recognising the urgency of the problem, initiating a housing reform agenda, and consulting publicly on the development of a National Housing and Homelessness Plan.

BPW Australia submitted our concerns about housing and homelessness to the consultation process, emphasising that the current housing stress across Australia disproportionately impacts women, and especially single and older women and rural women.

“A national housing plan needs to be gender balanced,” Gillian Lewis said.

“BPW Australia concurs that the most urgent priority is ensuring sufficient emergency housing for women and families escaping domestic and family violence, but the plan must recognise that women are far more vulnerable than men when they are under housing stress, in precarious housing or homeless.”

“A more targeted focus on how women’s safety and security are impacted by the lack of availability of affordable housing – both to purchase and to rent – is required.”

Recognising that housing policies and programs are delivered by State and Territory governments, using funds provided by the Federal government, the 2023 BPW Australia Conference resolved to advocate nationally for a significant increase in the funds budgeted for addressing the shortage of affordable and social housing to realistically address the full extent of housing need.

BPW Australia also encourages State and Territory governments to work with local governments to amend short-term rental accommodation regulations to encourage the return of houses and units to the long-term rental market, and to remove barriers to innovative housing solutions for women such as co-housing models, villages and tiny houses. BPW Australia has an ongoing connection with Probus Women’s Housing Association in Victoria, a success story for over 50 years, and commends this an example.

BPW Australia urges the Federal government to work with the States and Territories to ensure the national housing and homelessness plan delivers for all women, including rural women, at all stages of their life cycles.

### About BPW Australia

BPW Australia is a community of women working to end gender inequity, with a history of advocacy of over 75 years. Our members share an interest in the issues that affect working women in Australia and around the world today. BPW’s membership includes employers and employees who work across many sectors including corporate, small business, professions, trades, non-profit and government. BPW Australia is affiliated to BPW International, which has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and has expert and experienced representatives accredited to most United Nations agencies.

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