

Meeting	Mid-Term Conference
Date	14-16 June 2017
Title	HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
Resolution	The NCW Australia urges all National Councils in Australia to write to their State and Territory governments about providing increased mandatory incentives for affordable housing to alleviate housing stress and homelessness.

1. With the very high increases in dwelling prices in recent years to 2017, with the median price for houses in Melbourne at over \$700,000 and in Sydney at over \$1 million, housing affordability is declining especially for young people and for people on low and middle incomes. “Back in 1982, the [ABS Survey of Income and Housing](#) revealed that 168,000 or 10% of home buyers spent more than 30% of their gross household income on housing costs. Nearly 30 years later in 2011 these numbers had soared to 640,000, equivalent to 21% of all home buyers.” “According to the same ABS data source, households in 1990 on average valued their homes at a multiple that was four times their average household income. By 2011 this multiple had climbed to nearly six times average household income.” (Ref.G.Wood & R.Wong, Housing Affordability changes in Australia, 15/6/15) In the six years following 2011, house and rental prices have soared in many cities in Australia.
2. Meanwhile homelessness is very high. The General Social Survey of 2014 reported that 2.5 million people had experienced homelessness at some time. Homelessness Australia chair Jenny Smith noted that [one in ten Australian households are in housing stress](#) and at risk of homelessness. That is 850,000 people on the lowest 40% of incomes. (Ref: E Webb in The Conversation 3/8/16.)
3. It has been recommended to “Implement the [Henry Tax Review recommendations](#) on enhancing Rent Assistance to improve affordability for low income tenants especially in the capital city housing markets where rising rents have far outstripped the value of RA payments.”(Ref.H.Pawson et al in <https://theconversation.com/tackling-housing-unaffordability-a-10-point-national-plan>)
4. In 2017, about 2% of new homes are delivered by affordable and non-profit housing providers, and “even middle income first-home-buyers are now locked out of huge swathes of [cities like] Sydney”, [and other Capitals cities and trendy towns]. (H.Pawson) Whereas cities like London and New York “use their planning muscle to ensure the inclusion of affordable rental housing in all major new housing developments” at a rate of 5 to 10%. Other University researchers suggest 15%, and up to 30% on public land, should be for affordable housing. (Ref. L Troy et al “Sydney needs higher affordable housing targets”, The Conversation, 24/11/16)
5. It would be worthwhile States and Territories to commit to a Social and Affordable Housing Fund. Some States are to abolish Stamp Duty for first- home buyers, and some are introducing shared equity schemes.
- 6.“Fiscal concessions in the form of capital gains and land tax exemptions to home owners, negative gearing and concessionary capital gains tax for “mum and dad” investors, and asset test concessions to home owner retirees offer powerful incentives to accumulate wealth in housing assets.” (Ref.G.Wood & R.Wong, Housing Affordability changes in Australia, 15/6/15) Reform in carefully managed stages, of such fiscal concessions would address underlying structural problems with both housing and rental affordability, and high levels of housing stress.
- 7.National Councils of Women are affiliated with the International Council of Women, that was represented at the United Nations Habitat 3 at Quito in late 2016. Its report on the New Urban Agenda, stated: “Gender equity perspectives, especially from marginalized groups of all ages, must be integrated into the formulation and strengthening of all aspects of urban/human settlement policy, including urban plans, policies, and practices, as well as regulations and financing arrangements and governance. Policy must be viewed through an intersectional lens which includes gender, race, income, age, religion and culture.”(Ref.UN Habitat 3 Report.)
- 8.The New Urban Agenda must recognize that the city and the process of urban development and management exists and takes place in a framework of sustainable development that recognizes them as a subset of society, economy, and the environment.