

MEDIA RELEASE

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Regional Voices Inform Peak's Position Paper

Community Industry Group was proud to partner with Shelter NSW (NSW peak housing policy and advocacy body) to provide opportunity for regional input into its vision of "A secure home for all".

Shelter NSW CEO, Karen Walsh said, "Our strategic plan commits to the development of a shared contemporary vision and narrative that defines a sustainable and effective housing system for New South Wales."

"Access to safe, secure and affordable housing for people on low income is the biggest issue for our membership. Social housing has a waiting list in excess of 10 years in the region, and private rental is neither affordable nor available for people living on income support," CEO of the Community Industry Group, Nicky Sloan said, "So we were very keen for Shelter NSW to come to our region and hear first hand from service providers, service users, and people with lived experience of housing hardship to inform their policy position."

Around 30 people participated in the roundtable event, and they conveyed the harsh realities of finding, and keeping, a home in the Illawarra Shoalhaven.

Key messages from participants included:

- A good housing system includes choice of tenures – social housing, private rental and home ownership. All tenures should be secure and respected.
- Development of more social housing stock in the region which is based on universal design principles, has security of tenure, is integrated into the wider community and has good transport links and access to services.
- Policies to protect tenants. Private rental has become less secure due to the impact of the 'sharing economy'. Tenants are often subject to short term leases, no-fault evictions, short term holiday lettings and 'seasonal evictions'.
- No selling-off or redevelopment of high-value social housing if it means tenants will be moved to unsuitable accommodation or insalubrious or inaccessible areas.
- Incorporate sustainability measures for all types of housing to improve living standards and reduce energy costs for people on low income.

"It was an absolute honour to hear from regional voices," Karen Walsh said. "We are continuing our consultations over the next few weeks, and hope to have a policy Position Paper together before the end of next month."

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About the Community Industry Group

Community Industry (formerly known as Illawarra Forum) is the peak body working for community services and organisations in the South East of NSW. It supports community organisations, promotes expertise and innovation in community development, fosters industry development and provides advocacy for social justice. Community Industry Group is an independent organisation governed by a committee of management elected annually by the membership.

Community Industry Group represents the non-government community services industry in the South East of NSW, which consists of approximately 300 organisations, and works closely with numerous organisations which provide support to vulnerable people across the region.

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