



## Access to secure and affordable housing is a basic human right and the foundation for individual and family wellbeing.

Housing affordability and rental availability have become critical issues for Tasmanians looking for a place to call home.

Rental demand in Tasmania is the second highest in the country,<sup>1</sup> and housing<sup>2</sup> and rental<sup>3</sup> prices have rapidly increased in recent years.

The social services and the real estate sectors have warned that Hobart is quickly becoming Australia's least affordable capital city.<sup>4</sup>

Urgent and comprehensive action is needed to address these issues to recognise that housing is a fundamental human right and to ensure homes for all Tasmanians.

### THE GREENS WILL

- ▲ Allocate an extra \$40 million to the Housing Fund
- ▲ Give first home buyers a permanent stamp duty exemption
- ▲ Invest in urban renewal, with an emphasis on affordable housing in new developments.
- ▲ Work towards better use of unoccupied residences.
- ▲ Regulate for a fairer short stay market.

### SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Under the Liberals, the housing wait list has reached its highest level in a decade while the number of public housing applicants housed has decreased from 1011 in 2013/14 to 926 in 2015/16.

Despite this, the occupancy rate has increased, private rental assistance has decreased, waiting times have blown out, and the waiting list has increased by over 50%.<sup>5</sup>

The Greens will immediately end the Liberals' privatising of public housing land titles. Instead, we would invest \$10 million per year into new public housing stock, getting government back into the business of building homes for Tasmanians.

### FIRST HOME BUYERS

The Greens believe Tasmanians buying their first home must be prioritised over investors buying their second, third or tenth home.

We will implement a permanent stamp duty exemption for first home buyers, making buying a first home more affordable, giving a competitive edge to first home buyers over investors, and bringing us into line with the other states in Australia.

We will work with key stakeholders to determine appropriate thresholds to which this applies.

## CREATING COMMUNITIES

The Greens recognise the need to ensure new housing developments make provision for affordable housing.

We will establish a new Statutory Authority to work with Housing Tasmania in co-ordinating public housing and incentivising sustainable, high density private housing developments in strategic urban areas called Plan Tasmania.

We will regulate to ensure a minimum proportion of affordable housing in any major development projects, increasing the supply of affordable homes to both buy and rent over time.

Plan Tasmania will be equipped with a fund to acquire land along strategic urban and transport corridors for the purposes of high density social and mixed housing.

The goal is to both increase the supply of affordable housing and to create mixed, vibrant communities.

Plan Tasmania will also administer a fund to invest in public transport infrastructure, amenities, and recreation facilities in strategic urban areas and to incentivise investment in sustainable, high density urban development.

Plan Tasmania will be developed based on consultation and examination of similar, successful bodies around the country.

We will work with councils to ensure planning laws and zoning do not obstruct the housing market, including examining using mixed use zoning to allow currently vacant residential property above commercial premises to be utilised.

## UNOCCUPIED RESIDENCES

During the last ABS Census, 9.3% of private residences in Hobart were unoccupied and 14% of private residences in the State were unoccupied.<sup>6</sup> This is excluding short-stay accommodation which sits outside the private residence category.

The rental market squeeze is serious and we need to be sure families aren't sleeping in cars while homes are left empty for extended periods.

This is an Australia-wide problem. Nationally 11.2%<sup>7</sup> of private residences are unoccupied. The primary cause has been attributed to speculative investors relying on capital gains<sup>8</sup> and negative gearing.<sup>9</sup>

The Greens will lobby the Federal Government for capital gains and negative gearing reform, which are key obstacles to housing supply and affordability.

In the interim, we will introduce a vacant residency tax to apply to all vacant residential property regardless of ownership, similar to the scheme now established in Victoria.

## A FAIR SHORT STAY MARKET

There is compelling evidence that the short stay accommodation boom is squeezing both the housing market and on rental availability in Southern Tasmania.<sup>10</sup>

Census and ABS construction data indicates there may be as many as 6,552 more properties in the short stay accommodation market compared to 2011.<sup>11</sup> This does not include family homes that have rooms on the short stay market or are on the market while the occupiers are away.

It is likely that as many as half of these 6,552 are in the greater Hobart area.

The Greens will move to address this issue fairly and robustly, with a focus on regulating investors in the short stay market.

Rules for principle residence properties that offer short stay accommodation will remain unchanged. However, investment properties that are not the principle residence will be subject to regulatory changes.

There will be a ban on putting a property on the short stay market for owners based outside of Tasmania.

We will consult broadly to determine appropriate and fair regulations for commercial short stay investment properties, considering health, safety and fair competitive arrangements.

We will also implement a system similar to that used in other jurisdictions to limit the number of short stay investment properties in tight rental markets. This measure is critical to ensuring Tasmanians needing a home don't miss out.

This means that when cities such as Hobart experience rental shortages, short stay properties may be limited to the family home.

We will consult broadly with the community, experts and key stakeholders to determine the appropriate structure for these regulations.

None of these regulatory changes will affect Tasmanians who use Airbnb, or similar platforms, for their family home.

## REFERENCES

1. Jarrad Bevan, 'Tasmania, where rental demand is higher than anywhere in Australia', [realestate.com.au](http://realestate.com.au), 20 March 2017.
2. Anne Mather, 'Hobart residential property prices climb more than any other capital city', [The Mercury](http://The Mercury), 22 June, 2017.
3. ABC News, 'Tasmanian rental market tough on single parents, ex-prisoners, pet owners, tenant group says', 16 February, 2017.
4. Helen Kempton, 'Families struggling in Tasmania's tight rental market', [the Mercury](http://the Mercury), 4 October, 2017.
5. Department of Health and Human Services, 'Annual Report: 2015-16', Tasmania, 2016.
6. Census Quickstats, Greater Hobart, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017.
7. *ibid.*

8. David Scutt, 'Many new homes in Australia sit vacant as foreign investors bank on capital gains', [Business Insider Australia](http://Business Insider Australia), 10 December, 2015.

9. Laurence Troy and Bill Randolph, 'Negative gearing has created empty houses and artificial scarcity', [The Sydney Morning Herald](http://The Sydney Morning Herald), 28 March 2016.

10. Andrea Young and Lindsey Moffatt, 'Housing Related Poverty and Homelessness in Tasmania', [Parity Magazine](http://Parity Magazine), Vol. 30, no. 5, July 2017.

11. There are 3,247 less occupied private apartments and units in Tasmania in 2016 compared to 2011. Short term accommodation is [not considered a private dwelling](#).

2020 "other residential" buildings have been constructed between the 2011 and 2016 census. There has only been a private occupancy [increase of 1051](#). 969 have not entered the private residential market.

This means 4,216 "other residential" may be in the short stay market.

The census data also shows that there are 6,483 more private occupied houses. Yet 8,819 have been built between censuses. This means 2,336 houses may be in the short stay market.

In total, this is 6,552 more likely short stay properties in Tasmania since 2011. This does not include owner-occupied properties that have rooms rented out for short stay accommodation.

## INITIATIVE COST

Initiative Investment (\$m)	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Year
First Home Buyers	8.52	8.95	9.03	9.12
Housing Fund	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Land Fund	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
Plan Tasmania	2.96	3.01	3.08	3.14
Infrastructure Fund		20.00	20.00	20.00
Vacant Residence Tax	-22.09	-19.88	-17.89	-16.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.89</b>	<b>29.58</b>	<b>31.72</b>	<b>33.66</b>



Authorised by Cassy O'Connor MP, Parliament House, Hobart.

## ▲ WANT MORE INFO?

### Tasmanian Parliamentary Greens

South 7 Franklin Wharf, Hobart

North 1/195a Invermay Road, Launceston

Post: Parliament House, Hobart, 7000

Phone: (03) 6212 2228

Email: [greens@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:greens@parliament.tas.gov.au)

Web: [mps.tas.greens.org.au](http://mps.tas.greens.org.au)