

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

2017 - 2018

Division/Agency: Social Policy Division

Question No: 181

Topic: Budget Measure 17/18 - New National Housing and Homelessness Agreement: Planning and Zoning Reforms

Reference: Written

Senator: Cameron, Doug

Question:

1. What State and Territory government planning and zoning reforms does the government believe are necessary to accelerate increases in housing supply?
2. Will funding under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement be used to incentivise the States and Territories to undertake zoning and planning reform?
3. If yes, how much of the housing assistance payments to the States will be put to this purpose.
4. Will safeguards be put in place to ensure that incentive payments to the States don't divert Commonwealth funding away from investment in public housing stock and homelessness services?
5. What safeguards will be put in place to ensure that Commonwealth payments aren't made to States and Territories for reforms that they would have made in any event?

Answer:

1. The Australian Government will not specify the particular reforms that States are to undertake but will seek reforms that reduce costs of development and speed up housing supply, and make housing supply more responsive to changes in demand. This could include reforms to increase the density of supply where appropriate.

Residential land use planning reform has been covered in reviews at jurisdictional and national level, including in reports prepared by the Productivity Commission and includes things such as:

- shifting direction to strategic planning instead of assessment of individual developments; and
- streamlining processes such as broad zoning controls and risk-based development application processes.

2. Yes.
3. The terms of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) are subject to negotiation between the Australian Government, and the State and Territory governments.
4. The terms of the NHHA are subject to negotiation between the Australian Government, and the State and Territory governments.

The Australian Government has indicated an intention that an amount equal to the funding currently provided under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) will be quarantined for the provision of homelessness services in the NHHA.

The Commonwealth has also indicated an intention that the States and Territories agree to continue to match that funding, as State and Territory governments currently do under the NPAH.

Commonwealth funding provided under the National Affordable Housing Special Purpose Payment and the NPAH is not tied currently to public housing stock. The amount of funding provided to public housing, and how outcomes are achieved under the NHHA, is a matter for each State and Territory government.

5. Please refer to part 3 above.