



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Social Services**

<b>ALGA MAIL</b>
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Mayor Dr Felicity-ann Lewis  
President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Dear Mayor

Thank you for your letter of 25 August 2014 to the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Kevin Andrews MP, regarding the Australian Local Government Association's motions on the provision of affordable housing, and positive ageing. The Minister has asked me to reply to you on his behalf.

*Strategic Motion 54*

The Australian Government understands that housing affordability is a significant issue for many Australians. This is why the Government is already working closely with state, territory and local governments to increase the total supply of housing built in Australia by streamlining current land release and planning processes, cutting both red and green tape and reducing the taxes levied on the development of new housing stock.

Collectively, these actions will not only promote housing growth, providing much-needed social and financial benefits to communities all across Australia, but will also improve housing affordability, including for people with a disability.

The Government continues to provide the states and territories with approximately \$1.3 billion per annum under the National Affordable Housing Agreement and about 1.3 million individuals and families who pay rent in the private and community housing rental markets with around \$4.3 billion in Commonwealth Rent Assistance per annum.

You may be interested to know that the Department of Social Services is working closely with the National Disability Insurance Agency, the Agency responsible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), to maximise housing outcomes for people with disability.

Although the NDIS will not meet all the housing needs of people with disability, the Scheme will link participants with other mainstream services through advice and referral with existing housing support systems. Mainstream systems, such as state and territory public housing authorities, will continue to play an important role in supporting people with disability.

*Motion 54.3*

Addressing population ageing is a whole-of-government responsibility encompassing retirement income (pensions and superannuation), participation, including employment and volunteering, age discrimination, healthy ageing, health services and medical care, aged care, and carers.

As such, and as part of the Australian Government's commitment to streamline government processes and reduce duplication, the Government announced that it would abolish a number of non-statutory bodies where activities can be managed within another forum. The decision to cease the Advisory Panel on Positive Ageing was taken in this context.

Please be assured that the Government continues to seek and receive advice on seniors' interests and needs from a broad range of sources, including seniors and their representatives, industry and community stakeholders.

The Government also continues to look broadly at the wide range of issues that influence positive ageing and consults with organisations that are providing advice on relevant ageing issues, as we are doing with the aged care changes and the welfare review.

In this context, and at a time when older Australians are living longer healthier lives, their involvement in the community and workforce offers great benefits. Whether they choose to retire or remain in the workforce, senior Australians actively contribute to work, family and community life. Their experience, knowledge and achievements are invaluable assets that we all benefit from. As the ageing of the population results in a lower proportion of the population in the workforce, the Government is focusing on changes to policy settings to encourage people to work and to innovate, to promote greater openness and competition in markets, and to facilitate targeted infrastructure investment.

You may be interested to know that while there is no Minister for Ageing under the current parliamentary arrangements, the Assistant Minister for Social Services is responsible for both ageing and aged care, and disabilities.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely



**Kerrie Westcott**  
Acting Branch Manager  
Reform Support and Engagement Branch

18 September 2014