



CHIA Vic 2025 Conference

Mikaela Stafrace MBA, LLB. B.Comm, GAICD
Founder, WomenCAN Australia and
WomenCAN Pty Ltd
Myer Fellow
AMP Tomorrow Maker

**Empowering futures through
Training and Employment Pathways**

Current state of the social and affordable housing market

We have seen this before:

- History of the Housing Commission
- Surge demand for housing

The peer led model for education and employment of women and girls – the Outcomes and Impact

Federal and State government response

Next Steps

Current state of the social and affordable housing market

2.8% of market
– second lowest in Australia but 2nd largest population

Social housing
- Rent capped at 30% of income

82,000 units with 51,000 households on the waiting list

Expected to increase to 166,000 by 2035

Profile of tenant – our most vulnerable...

- The poor
- Women escaping DV,
- Mentally ill,
- Differently abled,
- Refugees
- Those at risk

3 players (really 4) –

Federal & State govt,

Community housing providers

Private sector developers

Where did we come from – we have seen this before

1920's & 1930's
Slum
eradication –
3000 Victoria
homes not fit
for habitation
(Dr Oswald
Barnett &
Premier Alvert
Dunstan)
Victoria
Housing
Commission
(1938 - 1994)

5.9 Million
migrants to
Australia
between 1940's
– 1970's

Started with
Estates and
ended with 44
Towers

Needed largest
number of
houses in
quickest time.

Technology
enabled
pre-cast
Concrete
fabrication

Joseph Monier
– reinforced
concrete

Between 1947
– 1961, public
housing stock
increased by
50%

Public
housing then
sold to
tenants to
increase home
ownership in
late 1960's



What is the peer led model for education and employment – Outcomes and Impact

- **My encounter with a homeless woman**
- **Winning the Myer Fellowship and the AMP Tomorrow Maker**
- **Bring women together in groups to transition through education and employment leveraging off their share lived experience**
- **Access to women through the rooming houses we serviced using my Facilities Maintenance social enterprise**
- **1000 women transitioned off Centrelink to a job with a TAFE qualification**

Government Response:

Commonwealth:

- Housing Australia and Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF)
- National Housing Accord
- National Housing & Homelessness Agreement

Victoria:

- Office of Housing

Rental Assistance, Home Guarantee Fund, Social Housing Accelerator payment, Legislative Reform - A better deal for Renters

1.2 million new homes in next 5 years with 55,000 social & affordable units



BUT...

- **Cost of imported materials:**
 - **Re-routing to avoid Red Sea adds 10-14 days**
 - **Shipping containers increased from \$1000 for 40' box to over \$6,000**
 - **Marine insurance premiums have increased by 6%**
 - **Australia has little capacity to manufacture steel & aluminum, logging limits restrict timber production high labor costs + skills shortages**

Next steps: We need to be creative

**Convert empty commercial property
Re-instate the Housing Commission
Audit current housing stock and match to tenant need**

**Shared Equity
Earlier access to Superannuation for older women at risk of homelessness**

**Small housing
Tax & Regulatory relief for private developers building appropriate accommodation**

**Concierge model in “lock & leave” apartment blocks
Train women in “handy skills”**