



SECTION 2

Questions taken on notice

Question 1

*Mr Stephen Bali: Among those 25 members, would you know, or can you take on notice and ask them—at the moment, as far as providing affordable housing, there doesn't seem to be any data from the CHPs to say what percentage of people are very low income, low income or moderate income under the definition. **Whether you're very low or moderate, you tick the box for being able to access affordable housing. But it's very hard to get data to know what the split is among those three groups. Would you know?***

Response

Faith Housing Australia advocates for a nationally consistent definition of affordable rental housing. We also support the implementation of a centralised monitoring framework for affordable housing dwellings across NSW.

Such a mechanism for the identification and monitoring of affordable rental housing could provide several benefits:

- Greater transparency of the current stock levels and new entries into the market.
- A register of rents being secured, along with the nature/eligibility of tenants.
- Rent level data for affordable dwellings, giving government visibility of the nature of programs required to support affordable housing initiatives.
- Capture of any development conditions from Councils for projects that have secured consents.
- Data on development timelines for new affordable housing stock, measuring the time taken to bring new units to market.



Question 2

Mr Stephen Bali: To go back to your earlier point and some of the questions raised here about SP2, I suppose the question or comment I have is that the potential concerns from the community would be that, usually when faith organisations are established, especially if you go back many years ago, the reason they usually had their church, mosque, temple or synagogue on a location, on a large piece of land, is because community faiths and other activities would be generated there—schools, nursing homes or aged-care assessments. To now go across into housing, in already established areas—the challenge you now have is that you don't pay council rates because you're a faith-based organisation, and you don't pay land tax, so this would be skewing the market, to a certain extent. The Government is going to get less money, yet you're providing housing—yes, at a discounted level but you are still entering in.

*As you said before, you need to have higher income earners in there as well, so there is no guarantee where the skew is going to go. If the faith groups want to enter the housing market and develop, especially—I suppose it's a longwinded question, but I'm just picking up on your earlier point where you said that one of the churches was saying, "We've got a spare oval." If you put more people into an area, they need to play soccer or football. If you just put a block of units on there, and you're not paying council rates or land tax, council now has to supply a football field somewhere else. **Can you see the challenge of not paying tax? Unless you're saying that churches are now happy to pay land tax and council rates, how is the public going to benefit by faith groups putting in additional housing?***

Response:

The intention of Faith Housing Australia's recommendation to include housing as a permissible use on land zoned SP2 – Place of Public Worship is to increase the supply of social and affordable housing, directly benefitting the community. Our members have indicated that, in some cases, to make housing viable on a particular site may require including a portion of market housing.

There is already a provision within the Local Government Act to support this. In 2010, the Act was amended to allow for partial rate exemption of church lands, reflecting the specific land uses conducted on each church site. The associated Department of local government circular (6 July 2010) stated, "*the amendment strengthens the exemptions from general rates that apply for religious bodies ...and ensures that land owned by a religious body ... is afforded a rate exemption to the full extent envisaged under the Local Government Act.*"

Importantly, if the use of the land on which the Place of Public Worship is situated changes to compete with the private sector – such as operating a commercial activity office or childcare centre – the Place of Public Worship exemption is removed for the portion of the land used for profit-generating profit activities. This ensures competitive neutrality.