

Media Release

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BUSHFIRE AND FLOOD VICTIMS STILL UNDER HOUSING 'DURESS'

Regional communities affected by recent flooding, drought and bushfire events are still struggling with a lack of secure and affordable housing.

That is the verdict from NCOSS's statewide consultation with more than 100 community sector staff and a survey of 157 non-government organisations across the state.

The consultations, which informed NCOSS's submission to the NSW Government's Housing Strategy Discussion Paper, highlight the impact natural disasters are having on housing availability and conditions across the state.

NCOSS CEO Joanna Quilty said the consultation with NGOs and frontline workers draws attention to the dire situation too many households are still confronting after a natural disaster occurs.

"In too many communities across the state, we are still hearing stories of people living in insecure or overcrowded arrangements after losing their homes through fires and floods," Ms Quilty said.

"This includes an increase in people living out of their cars, camping and sleeping rough. We are also hearing that COVID-19 is exacerbating the situation.

"As one regional community service provider told us, *'we see people living in non-compliant housing or living with black mould since the floods of 2017, whose only other option is homelessness'*.

"The impact that such inadequate circumstances have on mental and physical well-being was frequently raised by those we spoke to.

"We also heard that *'many bushfire victims are still housed with friends, family or if unlucky not to have anyone to take them in are sleeping rough in the areas where they were burnt out'*."

NCOSS's submission urges the State Government to act on NSW's housing crisis, by providing secure housing and boosting the residential construction industry.

"Growing the supply of social housing by 5,000 per annum, and similar for affordable housing, would rapidly deliver jobs to regional communities, support small and medium sized enterprises and stem rising homelessness," Ms Quilty said.

"It's the infrastructure boom that delivers both social and economic benefits at the time we most need it, to the locations that most need it."

NCOSS's submission to the NSW Government's Housing Strategy can be viewed [here](#).

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