

Media release**Rob Stokes appointed as incoming Chair of Faith Housing Alliance**

The former New South Wales Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport has been announced as the new Chair of Faith Housing Alliance, the peak body representing community housing providers, organisations and individuals united by a faith mission.

“Housing and planning reform have been key themes across my 16 years in politics, and as Chair, I intend to be a clear voice for housing justice,” said Stokes.

“The lack of stable and safe social and affordable housing in NSW and across Australia has been at crisis levels for some time, but now with rent inflation affecting both cities and regional areas, rebounding migration and the soaring cost of basic living expenses, hundreds of thousands of households are at risk.

“Member organisations with a faith-driven purpose, like Anglicare, Muslimcare and Wesley Mission, are committed to providing more than just a roof – and they have experience developed over generations of supporting individuals and families with wrap-around services that make tenancies sustainable and break the cycle of homelessness.

“Community Housing Providers with a faith mission are already making a significant impact, with four of our members responsible for delivering 65% of the housing under the NSW Social and Affordable Housing Fund. Amelie Housing, Anglicare Sydney, BaptistCare NSW & ACT, and Uniting NSW & ACT have co-contributed resources to make thousands of new homes feasible.

“I’m also looking forward to opening up discussions with denominational leaders about innovative partnerships should they feel called to use their land for housing justice,” said Stokes.

“Housing justice means more than increasing supply – it requires a focus on shelter for all – including those who might never afford it. Efforts to rapidly scale up housing supply are stifled by infrastructure funding constraints and slow development assessment, while tax policy benefits a minority of people to purchase multiple homes while others have none. Where’s the public benefit in that?

“The Housing Australia Future Fund is now stalled until October, and at a local level, Councils continue to battle negative NIMBYs, where more productive community engagement can produce housing that enhances neighbourhoods.

“Housing is consistently a top concern for Australians, but for many, it is beyond critical, as without stable shelter, lives fall apart. We’ve all got a part to play in tackling this crisis,” Stokes emphasised.

CEO of Faith Housing Alliance, Rose Thomson, said Stokes’ is a natural fit to lead as Chair.

“Stokes has been inspired by the work of our members who are at the forefront of this crisis every day. These are some of Australia’s most trusted charities whose dedication is a vibrant expression of their faith, long-term commitment to social justice and building communities where everyone can thrive,” said Thomson.

“Stokes, like many Australians, recognises that this issue is critical and wants to use his skills and capacities to address the housing crisis. We welcome everyone who feels passionately that housing is a human right to add their voice and be part of making a difference across our cities and regions.”

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Rob Stokes and Rose Thomson are available for interview**

Background

Rob Stokes is an urbanist and recognised thought leader on sustainable urban development. He served as Australia's first-ever minister for Active Transport with the NSW Government, and also served as minister for Planning, Public Spaces, Cities, Infrastructure, Transport, Education, Environment and Heritage in a political career spanning more than 15 years.

Rob is a regular columnist on cities and planning and has written over 20 articles in referred books and journals. A qualified lawyer, Rob has read sustainable urban development at Oxford and completed a PhD in planning law under a Commonwealth Scholarship.

He was announced as a member of the Albanese Government's Urban Policy Forum in May 2023.

Faith Housing Alliance

Faith Housing Alliance is the NSW peak body supporting the faith housing sector. Its members include community housing providers, concerned individuals and supporting organisations, all united by a faith mission. Its member organisations support many of the most vulnerable people across Australia, helping to end homelessness by providing long-term social and affordable rental housing.

Previously known as Churches Housing Inc., the reshaped Board of Faith Housing Alliance is the culmination of a two-year revitalisation process resulting in member growth and an accelerated advocacy program.

Faith Housing Alliance member organisations – including Christian, Muslim, Jewish and other faith traditions – believe in social justice, compassion, respect, and integrity.

Faith Housing Alliance is committed to partnering with the government to address the urgent need for more social and affordable rental housing and the vital support needed to give people hope for a better future.