



Terry Barratt

Greens Candidate for Kiama

Clean Politics, Clean Earth, Empowered Communities



Media Release

February 15, 2015

Social housing consultation ignores the evidence for genuine solutions

Terry Barratt, Greens candidate for the seat of Kiama, has called on the community, particularly tenants in social housing and those almost three and a half thousand applicants on the Illawarra Shoalhaven District housing waiting list, to tell the State Government to get serious about delivering affordable and social housing solutions. His comments follow the Government's recent consultation session on Social Housing held at the Bomaderry Bowling Club.

"Last year the Greens initiated a Select Committee inquiry into Social, Public and Affordable Housing that received more than 250 submissions and undertook extensive consultation and research across the state. That inquiry delivered 41 recommendations that were welcomed by many in the housing advocacy sector as a blueprint for resolving the affordable housing crisis in NSW.

"Sadly, the Government's discussion paper ignores the 41 recommendations from the Select Committee, as well as the clear recommendations from the Auditor-General's report on public housing and the Public Accounts Committee's inquiry on tenancy management," Mr Barratt said.

"Instead of drawing on what the experts and stakeholders in the community have already told us, the NSW government wants to take us back to square one. They're asking the community for ideas and seem likely to continue with their unsustainable approach of selling off public housing to fund the budget shortfall."

Mr Barratt attended the consultation session at the bowling club and was disappointed to find the attendees were mainly government agency and non-government organisations with very few tenants present.

At the outset, Mr Barratt urged the attendees during their discussions to consider why the government since its election in 2011 had failed to produce a policy on social housing and ignored the 41 recommendations of last year's select committee enquiry and the other two reports produced since then.

Mr Barratt warned that a narrow focus on social housing by Government, without recognising the relevance of broader housing affordability issues and the connections between housing and employment, education, transport and support services would fail to deliver effective solutions.

"No amount of rhetoric about encouraging people to find a pathway out of social housing can help unless the social housing system actually connects people with the opportunities and supports their needs, and unless there is a viable way into the private rental market.

"Access to safe, secure and appropriately located housing is a key determinant of people's wellbeing, as it provides the basis for health, employment and education and access to consistent services.

"In NSW there are nearly 300,000 people who live in social housing and almost 60,000 on the waiting list. There needs to be a strong focus on how the government ensures increased and appropriate housing stock, along with integration with services and community connections for residents.

"Without the provision of additional housing there is little hope that the trend of increased homelessness can be turned around," Mr Barratt warned.

Mr Barratt encouraged the public to engage with the consultation process and make use of the information available from inquiries and housing advocacy organisations.

"It is important that the community inform the government that improving the availability of affordable and social housing is a priority and there is ample direction available about how they could take action.

Submissions on the Social Housing Discussion Paper close this coming Friday, 20 February 2015. The NSW Government is due to respond to the Select Committee's recommendations on 9 March 2015.

Terry Barratt: mobile phone: 0439 494 402
Website – kiama2015.kiamagreens.org.au

Home Phone: 4422 1211
Email: terry@nsw.greens.org.au