



SKYE KAKOSCHKE-MOORE

Nick Xenophon Team
Senator for South Australia

Auditor-General Grant Hehir
Australian National Audit Office
GPO Box 707
Canberra ACT 2601

Via email: external.relations@anao.gov.au

Dear Auditor-General

RE: Request for Audit of the National Affordable Housing Agreement

I write to request an urgent audit of the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) following revelations during Senate Estimates that the Federal Government doesn't know what the \$1.3billion per year in funding is spent on.

The NAHA is an agreement by the Council of Australian Governments which provides funding for housing assistance to low and middle income earners. Its stated aims include ensuring all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation.

On Thursday, October 20, during a Senate Estimates hearing, I asked the Department of Social Services what funding had been allocated specifically for women's shelters and safe houses given the Government's commitment to women's safety and combatting family violence.

The Department stated that funding was primarily provided by state governments but there was provision under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) for service delivery under which domestic violence was a priority. It went on to say that the \$1.3b per year of Commonwealth funds under the NAHA can be used for shelters, service delivery and capital projects such as building of shelters – although domestic violence is not a priority under this agreement. However, it went on to say that under the NPAH which provides \$115million over two years, and the NAHA, it is up to the states to decide how that money is spent.

With further questioning, Assistant Minister for Social Services Senator Zed Seselja conceded that there are drawbacks with NAHA as it is not clear exactly what are the outputs and outcomes in detail in terms of some of that spending. Minister Seselja stated: 'I think it is an important area of reform and whether it is domestic violence funding or it's in other outcomes for that \$1.3billion I think it is right for reform to ensure there's maximum transparency and that we know what we are getting for all of our spending'.

Electorate Office
187 Grenfell Street
Adelaide, South Australia 5000
Phone: (08) 8232 0220
Fax: (08) 8232 4161
Email: Senator.Kakoschke-Moore@aph.gov.au

Parliament House
Canberra, ACT 2600
Phone: (02) 6277 3178
Fax: (02) 6277 5804

DSS Secretary Finn Pratt then went on to say that multiple housing ministers over the last five or six years have also felt that there is a need to open up NAHA and reconsider how it is structured.

The Hansard of the Community Affairs Legislation Committee is enclosed for your reference (see from page 92).

The evidence of DSS and the Assistant Minister demonstrate that the government is well aware of the 'challenges and drawbacks' of NAHA and has failed to review the agreement and spending thereunder. I respectfully submit that this should be sufficient cause for a review by the Office of the Auditor General so that it can be determined exactly what the states are applying the funds towards.

Yours sincerely,



SKYE KAKOSCHKE-MOORE

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