



Australian Housing
and Urban Research Institute

ABN 11 090 448 918

National Office
Level 1, 114 Flinders Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Australia
Phone +61 3 9660 2300
Email information@ahuri.edu.au
Web www.ahuri.edu.au

27 February 2017

Housing Unit Manager
Social Policy Division
The Treasury
Langton Crescent
PARKES ACT 2600
Email: socialimpactinvesting@treasury.gov.au

Re: Social Impact Investing—Discussion Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Social Impact Investing Discussion Paper. I understand that the Treasury is seeking written input by 27 February 2017.

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) has recently commenced a program of research relevant to the Discussion Paper—an *Evidence-Based Policy Inquiry into social impact investment for housing and homelessness outcomes*, led by Professor Kristy Muir.

The AHURI Inquiry is investigating the opportunity, capacity and ability of social impact investments to create social change in housing and homelessness in Australia. Drawing on national and international evidence and new empirical data, findings are intended to inform Australian housing affordability and homelessness policy.

The AHURI Inquiry offers an integrated suite of research activities and engagement with policy and industry through Inquiry Panel meetings, to inform the following overarching question: *Can social impact investment make a difference to housing and homelessness outcomes?*

The AHURI Inquiry is structured to address a series of research questions:

- What is social impact investing and how can it be applied to housing and homelessness policy in Australia?
- What are the actual, potential and perceived opportunities and risks of social impact investing for housing and homelessness policy in Australia for householders, institutional actors and investors? Who might benefit most and who is in danger of being left behind?
- How can social impact investment be operationalised to housing policy in the Australian context and what role can/should different actors, including government, play?

The AHURI Inquiry will develop an understanding of the opportunities, risks and possibilities of social impact investment for housing and homelessness in Australia. It will examine national and international evidence of how social impact investment has been applied to housing, homelessness and related social policy areas.

The AHURI Inquiry will also determine the extent of, and potential for, social impact investment in affordable housing in Australia. The research will explore sector motivation, criteria for investment, innovation and barriers, and future opportunities, and will examine how social impact investment may expand housing options for vulnerable seniors, people with disabilities and homeless people, and improve outcomes for homeless people through social enterprises. A range of impact investment vehicles including mutual funds, social impact bonds, venture capital and loans are being examined.

An Inquiry Panel will draw together evidence, the outcomes of the research, and policy and practice expertise to address the policy issue and to make particular recommendations for policy development and/or practice innovation. This discussion is informed by the research conducted through the AHURI Inquiry research components. The Inquiry Panel will meet twice in Sydney—the first meeting was held in September 2016 and a further meeting is scheduled for August 2017. The Panel is facilitated by Dr Michael Fotheringham, Deputy Executive Director of AHURI.

The Final Report from the AHURI Inquiry is due to be published in early 2018.

If there is any way we can be of further assistance, please contact me directly on 03 9660 2300.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'I. Winter', written in a cursive style.

Dr Ian Winter
Executive Director