FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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"Housing is infrastructure too"
Response to Queensland State Budget 2018-19

Queensland's peak body for the housing and homelessness sector, Q Shelter, said that social and affordable housing should be part of the record increase in infrastructure spending featured in this year's Queensland State Budget.

Q Shelter's President, Rachel Watson, said that the Queensland Treasurer's focus on boosting productivity and creating jobs through infrastructure investment could also be applied to funding more social and affordable housing.

"We believe that social and affordable housing is also key infrastructure for the state, and that investment in this sector would see significant long-term returns for taxpayers." Ms Watson said.

"Research shows that every dollar invested in social and affordable housing delivers around seven dollars in return for government."

"Funding social and affordable infrastructure is a solid investment and would see long-term savings to our welfare, health, and judicial systems; not to mention easing the burden on our housing and homelessness sector." Ms Watson added.

Ms Watson argued that social housing was essential infrastructure that builds communities and promoted jobs and inclusion.

"Funding the construction of more social and affordable housing would create jobs for workers across the construction industry."

Q Shelter welcomed funding that confirmed key planks in the Queensland Housing Strategy, including new social housing across Brisbane.

Ms Watson said that the Queensland Government had made a good start on delivering new social housing through the release of the *Queensland Housing Strategy* last year, but said there were other reforms that government could pursue to ease the burden on low-income Queenslanders.

"We need to engage and empower the not-for-profit sector to deliver social and affordable housing." Ms Watson said.

"Community Housing Providers are ready, willing, and able to deliver more social and affordable housing, and we need to make sure we're leveraging their full potential in order to address housing need across the state."

"We also think that the Queensland Government could support housing providers by unlocking public land at below market rates for not-for-profit providers, and allowing higher density housing for affordable housing projects." Ms Watson added.

Q Shelter praised the Queensland Government for their $249m investment in remote housing, and said that they would continue to call on the Turnbull Government to match state funding and deliver desperately needed housing for remote communities.

"Investment in remote housing has delivered jobs, training, health, and education outcomes that are critical to meeting targets under Closing the Gap." Ms Watson said.

Q Shelter also praised the Queensland Government for their commitment to $5.6bn of concessions to fund a range of energy rebates and concessions for vulnerable Queenslanders.

Although these concessions would provide immediate relief for vulnerable Queenslanders, Ms Watson said that ramping up investment in social and affordable housing would secure event longer-term returns in alleviating poverty and hardship across Queensland.

Q Shelter also commended the Queensland Government's commitment to Human Rights Legislation for Queensland.

"It's essential that this legislation addresses housing as a most fundamental right" Ms Watson said.

"Strengthening the legal basis to housing vulnerable Queenslanders strengthens the foundations for achieving focussed outcomes and targets for addressing need."

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Queensland Shelter

Queensland Shelter is the state's peak body for the housing and homelessness sector.

Founded over thirty years ago, Queensland Shelter is a member-based organisation funded by the Queensland Government. They work with both the state government and housing and homelessness sector to reform, grow, engage, and build the capacity of the housing and homelessness sector.