



Position Paper: Championing Moveable Tiny Houses on Wheels and Skids as an Affordable Housing Solution

Vision Statement

Australian housing affordability is in crisis, affecting all parts of Australia, in regional, rural and city locations. The Australian Government recognises that ["Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living including adequate food, water and housing and to the continuous improvement of living conditions."](#) (*International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights ICESAR Article 11 & Australian Human Rights Commission*).

Tiny House Champions seek the recognition and acceptance of Tiny Houses on Wheels and Skids as a realistic and affordable form of permanent housing in Australia and as a new housing typology in planning schemes, building legislation and local laws across Australia.

Background: Real housing that meets a real need

Tiny House Champions believe that Tiny Houses on Wheels and Skids can provide a realistic and affordable housing solution and help to tackle the housing affordability crisis in Australia.

Tiny House Champions believe that people should have a greater choice about how they want to live and the home that delivers them with housing security, whilst meeting their lifestyle needs.

Tiny House Champions recognise that Tiny Houses on Wheels and Skids will not suit everyone, but with the growing number of people experiencing homelessness and insecure housing, this form of housing on a moveable base should be seen as a legitimate contribution to Australia's housing typology.

A significant barrier for many people seeking permanent housing is the price of land. Yet residential, rural and farming land is often under utilised and could become part of a sharing economy providing security for both owner and tenant through a formal land tenancy arrangement.

There is a shortfall in affordable rental accommodation across Australia, not just in the big cities but also in rural and regional areas. Seasonal farm workers, hospitality and support staff in tourist centres, and low to middle income earners often struggle to find accommodation in locations where market forces such as short-term holiday rentals limit supply or high demand leads to rents that are beyond their means.

The public housing waitlists are long and the housing stock does not always fit the needs of people who seek a home. They often provide a one size fits all solution meaning they may overlook the needs for ageing in place, single parent families, or people with physical and mental disabilities. Private rental housing is under the same affordability pressures as owner-occupied housing. Existing rental housing stock offers a limited range of housing types and sizes, which is often unsuitable for sole occupants and an individual's household needs.

The Australian and Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) in their Public Housing renewal and social mix policy brief dated 17 August 2020 has found that Australia has a shortfall of 478,800 of affordable and available private rental dwellings for lower income households in 2016. As of June 2019, there was a public housing waitlist of 148,520. It also highlights that public housing stock is not fit for today's tenants with 57% of public housing single person households; 16% of public housing was under utilised in 2016 in that there were two or more bedrooms than there were residents and 1 out of 3 social housing households have at least one member with a disability.

Moveable tiny houses can also provide a timely and affordable housing response in times of natural disasters where houses are damaged or destroyed. A ready supply of moveable tiny houses could provide a practical, fast track response to emergency housing.

Australians forced to couch-surf, live in their car, in shelters, or on the streets, is not something a caring society can ignore.

This crisis continues - all whilst there is serviced land and community services available for the placement of Tiny Houses on Wheels and Skids and there are landowners willing to share their land.

Problem

Moveable tiny houses are not a transportable home currently covered under regulations and they are not a recreational vehicle like a caravan, yet they may be connected to a trailer (or skid base). If they are not connected to the ground then they are not a typical house for the purposes of existing state and territory laws. Moveable tiny houses are not defined or recognised in any State Planning Legislation; the National Construction Code; or national vehicle regulations.

Local government laws around the country also differ, but the majority of local councils would deem a moveable tiny house as a caravan hence restricting their use as a permanent dwelling.

Moveable tiny houses are not recognised as a building under the National Construction Code. Similarly, they are not defined in state and territory building legislation as a 'building', therefore if they are not connected to the land they do not trigger building approval requirements.

The lack of definition and regulatory provisions for moveable tiny houses results in many people choosing to live in moveable homes 'under the radar' with a fear of being asked to move on, but with no lawful alternative. On the other hand, those who seek a pathway through the planning and building system often get confusing responses from authorities and so become frustrated by the inability of the system to recognise the nature of these homes and more importantly the potential they offer as a realistic and affordable housing solution.

Solution

The position paper will form part of the advocacy work with Federal and State Ministers and Opposition Spokespersons, Local Government Associations and Australian Local Governments Three key reforms are needed to deliver a genuine policy response for moveable tiny houses in Australia.

1. To implement nationally consistent state and local planning provisions that define moveable tiny houses and permit their placement on any land where conventional dwelling houses are currently permissible.
2. To establish recognition in building legislation of moveable tiny houses as 'dwellings' suitable for permanent occupation.
3. To promote technical design and construction methods that reflect the unique attributes of moveable tiny houses.

Who are Tiny House Champions?

Tiny House Champions are people from all walks of life and professions who feel that everyone has the right to have an adequate standard of living, and particularly in housing choices.

Tiny House Champions support the call to action to modernize Australia's planning and building system to recognise this housing typology and provide clear direction for its placement, design and construction.

How to become a Tiny House Champion?

ATHA wants to recognise the Alliances created and there is a campaign page on our website to recognise Tiny House Champions who sign up. To sign up please send the details below to: admin@tinyhouse.org.au

- Council/Business/Organisation/Association/Company: Your name, title and logo
- Academics and Professionals: Your name and title

Please note that any information and logos provided by supporters, will be displayed on our website and used throughout the Campaign.

Facilitated by the Australian Tiny House Association

Australian Registered Body # 648 534 203

Enquiries: admin@tinyhouse.org.au