

Building on an NGO foundation for Social Housing in South Australia

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South Australian social housing is characterised by a large state owned sector (public housing) and a much smaller NGO sector that manages community housing, homelessness services and an emerging “affordable housing” program.

The strengths of the NGO housing sector relate to a connectedness to place and an ability (and flexibility) to provide locally tailored services to the differing needs of different communities and needs groups.

Drawing on international and national research and the author’s extensive experience in public and community housing, this paper argues that there is an opportunity to not just grow the NGO housing sector, but to adopt an overall NGO-style of ownership and management across the whole social housing system in this state.

A social housing system re-configured along these lines would inject a new set of accountabilities and responsibilities into the management of social housing and would challenge the paradigm that places public sector organisations (and their processes and practices) at the apex of social housing provision.

It would also enable the creation of new NGO-style entities that would be inextricably linked to local needs and conditions while at the same time being appropriately regulated to ensure optimum housing outcomes for low income South Australians.