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7 March 2024

The Hon Jim Chalmers MP, Treasurer of Australia
The Hon Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy
The Hon Julie Collins MP, Minister for Housing
Senator Jenny McAllister, Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy

Dear Minister Chalmers, Minister Bowen, Minister Collins, and Senator McAllister,

Re: Expansion of the Household Energy Upgrades Fund

We represent 74 civil society organisations with interests in energy affordability, health, climate justice, workers' rights, and housing. We are writing to commend you on the progress of the initial Household Energy Upgrades Fund announced in the 2023-2024 Federal budget and to urge you to increase the funding to ensure all social housing is upgraded.

This initiative, which included a dedicated \$300 million to partner with states and territories to improve the energy performance of social housing, is a step forward in addressing the cost of living crisis. It will also improve housing conditions for some of the most disadvantaged people in our society living in some of the lowest-quality housing.

We are pleased to see multiple state and territory governments have announced that they will match the funding by delivering programs that will impact tens of thousands of people. The Federal Government's leadership has catalysed a further \$150 million in co-contributions so far, contributing to climate mitigation, improved health and wellbeing outcomes, and heatwave resilience.

However, the initial funding will only reach a fraction of the over 400,000 social housing dwellings in Australia. It's clear that significantly more investment is needed to realise these benefits for all social housing tenants. We are also concerned that there is currently little dedicated funding to retrofit remote First Nations social housing, where needs and benefits are significant.

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Given this, we urge you to establish targets and track progress to improve the energy performance (energy efficiency, electrification and, where suitable, rooftop solar with battery storage) to ensure all suitable social housing is retrofitted by 2030. This requires expanding the \$300m social housing component of the Household Energy Upgrades Fund in the 2024-2025 budget, with at least a six-fold increase in total funding out to 2030. We also call for a dedicated stream of federal government funds to prioritise remote social and Aboriginal-controlled housing, which could support the First Nations Clean Energy Strategy.

Expanding this successful program will address cost-of-living pressures for more people in our community, improve health and wellbeing outcomes, build climate resilience, help to develop the industry capacity needed to improve the energy performance of our housing stock more broadly, and contribute to meeting carbon emission reduction goals. Improved energy performance will also help social housing tenants to share in the potential benefits of tariff reform and demand-response measures.

We applaud your leadership in this vital area and look forward to seeing the Household Energy Upgrades Fund grow in scope and impact. We are eager to discuss this further and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this initiative and how it can be developed further.

Yours sincerely,

1 Million Women

350.org

ACF Community Canberra

ACF Community Geelong

ACOSS

ACT Shelter

ACTCOSS

ANIKA Legal

Anti-Poverty Network SA

Asthma Australia

Australian Conservation Foundation

Bass Coast Climate Action Network

Better Renting

Beyond Zero Emissions

CANSign

Care Financial Counselling Service

Community Housing Industry Association

Clarence Climate Action

Climate Action Hobart

Climate Council

Climate Emergency Australia

Climate Justice Union

Combined Pensioners & Superannuants

Association

Community Power Agency

Conservation Council of SA

Consumer Policy Research Centre

COTA ACT

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Darwin Community Legal Service
Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action
Electrify Canberra
Energetic Communities
Environment Centre NT
Environment Victoria
First Nations Clean Energy Network
Friends of the Earth
Healthy Futures
Housing for Health Incubator
Jesuit Social Services
Light House Architecture and Science
Make Renting Fair Alliance WA
National Shelter
NCOSS
Newtown Climate
Nillumbik Climate Action Team
NTCOSS
Older Women's Network NSW
Parents for Climate
Peoples Climate Assembly
Public Interest Advocacy Shelter
Power Together
QCOSS
QShelter
Queensland Conservation Council
Renters and Housing Union
Renew
SACOSS
Shelter NSW
Shelter SA
Shelter WA
Solar Citizens
St Vincent de Paul Society National Council
Stiebel Eltron
Sustainable Living Tasmania

Sweltering Cities
TasCOSS
Tasmanian Climate Collective
Tenants Tasmania
Tenants' Union of NSW
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Independently organised ACF group



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Tenants' Union of Tasmania



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