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To whom it may concern,

We applaud the ACT government's decision to introduce minimum energy efficiency standards for rental homes.

Everyone should have a healthy home. But currently Canberra's landlords are not required to ensure that rental homes can affordably be kept at liveable temperatures through the peak of summer or in the depths of winter. This is making people sick. When properties don't meet decent standards, our friends, family members and neighbours struggle.

We support a minimum standard of ceiling insulation for ACT rental homes. However, the proposed standard will still leave many renters in underperforming homes. The standard should lay out a pathway to greater ambition. An expanded standard would mean affordable, liveable homes for the one in three people who rent in the ACT.

Well-documented benefits of minimum standards include:

- **Better public health.** Energy-efficiency interventions lead to improved health outcomes such as fewer days off work and school, fewer visits to doctors, and fewer hospitalisations due to respiratory conditions.[1] A Better Renting report found that over forty Canberrans die annually from cold housing due to illnesses like cardiovascular or respiratory disease.[2]
- **Lifting energy standards cuts bills.** As Acil Allen's Regulation Impact Statement demonstrates, a ceiling insulation standard could save renters over \$10,000 per household. The benefits of requiring heaters are almost as great, at over \$8000 per household. As the RIS notes, even if renters paid for the cost of these retrofits, they would still receive a net benefit. Energy savings will particularly benefit the thousands of people in the ACT on lower-incomes, who spend a greater proportion of income on energy, and who are more likely to face energy debt, deprivation, and disconnection due to unaffordable energy bills.[3]

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- **Increased climate resilience and reduced emissions.** Efficiency standards mean that ACT residents can keep warm or cool while using less energy – increasing the climate resilience of housing stock while reducing greenhouse pollution. Requiring energy-efficient RCAC will reduce heating costs in winter, while also improving climate resilience in summer, potentially reducing mortality from heatwaves.[4]

It is welcome to see the ACT Government taking steps to ensure that renters can be assured of a decent standard. We look forward to greater ambition in these standards so that the specified minimum will truly enable renters to have healthy and affordable homes.

[1] Philippa Howden-Chapman et al., “Effect of Insulating Existing Houses on Health Inequality: Cluster Randomised Study in the Community,” *BMJ* 334, no. 7591 (March 3, 2007): 460, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.39070.573032.80>.

[2] Better Renting, “Unsafe as Houses: Cold-Housing Deaths in the ACT” (Canberra, August 2019), https://www.betterrenting.org.au/unsafe_as_houses.

[3] ACOSS, “Energy Stressed in Australia,” 2018.

[4] Abderrezak Bouchama et al., “Prognostic Factors in Heat Wave – Related Deaths,” *Archives of Internal Medicine* 167, no. 20 (2012): 2170–76.

Everyone should have a healthy home

Signatory organisations



St Vincent de Paul Society
CANBERRA/GOULBURN
good works



YWCA
CANBERRA



**CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**
ACT REGION

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AASW

Australian Association
of Social Workers

**SWELTERING
CITIES** A stylized orange house icon with rain falling from its roof, positioned to the right of the word "CITIES".



community power
agency



**VENTURE
HOUSING COMPANY**

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR TERRITORIANS



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Circle Green 
Community Legal



AUSTRALIAN
LAWYERS
FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

Australian
Architects Declare
Climate and
Biodiversity
Emergency

CJU
CLIMATE JUSTICE UNION

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