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WORKER SHORTAGE AND HOUSING CRISIS KEY TESTS FOR NATIONAL CABINET

"Tomorrow's National Cabinet meeting is a key opportunity for our nation's leaders to finally take comprehensive action on Australia's unprecedented worker and housing shortages, which are holding our nation back," said Daniel Wild, Deputy Executive Director of the Institute of Public Affairs.

Research by the IPA has established the federal government's unplanned increases to the migration intake will cause a shortage of over 252,000 houses over the next five years. Therefore, the National Cabinet agenda item of 'housing and planning reforms' has never been more urgent.

"Migration, workforce, and housing policy are at a historically low ebb. Across governments, at all levels, there is not a comprehensive focus on solving the challenges of getting more Australians into work and housing. National Cabinet needs to seize this moment," said Mr Wild.

For National Cabinet to be a success our leaders need to do the following:

- **Abandon the flawed Migration Review, released in April 2023, and ensure ongoing analysis considers the skills of Australian workers prevented getting into work, available housing stock and capacity of the nation's vital infrastructure.**
- **Immediately review the recently announced unplanned increases in migration and international student intake, and adjust to levels commensurate to available housing over the next five years, ensuring Australians can still purchase their first home.**
- **Commit to extending, and making permanent, the temporary changes to the work bonus scheme by removing all tax and red-tape barriers currently preventing more Australian pensioners, veterans, and students from entering work.**

"The federal government missed an opportunity earlier this year to support getting more Australians into work by continuing the short-sighted and lazy approach of plugging Australia's worker shortage simply with more migration," said Mr Wild.

"Any proposal to improve housing accessibility and affordability must include a re-assessment of the federal government's commitment to an unprecedented, and unplanned surge to migration and international students over the coming five-year period."

"Our leaders have the tools to tackle Australia's unprecedented worker shortage via simple and effective reforms, such as cutting red tape to allow our pensioners, veterans, and students to work, rather than relying on migration, which will stretch our already failing infrastructure," said Mr Wild.

Australian families are feeling the pinch from cost-of-living pressures, including rapidly rising energy bills, rents, mortgages, and the effects of high inflation caused by government spending levels.

"Australians expect their political leaders to address the pressing issues facing our nation's future, and it is critical that National Cabinet provide tangible actions to alleviate cost of living and housing affordability pressures," said Mr Wild.

"Tomorrow is a test of the political leadership of the Prime Minister and the state Premiers, and will reveal their willingness to engage with pressing policy issues facing our nation's future or rather their desire to play the blame game while buck-passing their responsibilities."

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