

24 April 2026

Mr Ron Sao MLA
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
Level 2, 2 Parliament Place
WEST PERTH WA 6005

By email: lapac@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr Sao

INQUIRY INTO LAND RENT SCHEMES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Thank you for your letter dated 3 March 2026 inviting the Law Society of Western Australia to make a submission to the Public Accounts Committee's inquiry into the feasibility of land rent schemes in Western Australia. The inquiry's terms of reference were considered by the Law Society's Environment, Town Planning and Local Government Committee.

The Law Society is the peak professional association for lawyers in Western Australia. Established in 1927, the Society is a not-for-profit association dedicated to the representation of its members and provides leadership and advocacy on law reform, access to justice and the rule of law.

The Law Society broadly supports the introduction of an appropriately designed government land rent or similar scheme in Western Australia. A land rent scheme is an opportunity to promote the supply of privately owned and occupied dwellings, and affordable home ownership.

The Environment, Town Planning and Local Government Committee identified the following considerations in the proposal to develop a land rent scheme in Western Australia:

Potential framework, settings and administration of any scheme

- Land rent schemes provide an opportunity to incentivise good planning and environmental outcomes by land developers and builders. The Scheme should provide incentives or increased financial benefits to developers who avoid clearing native vegetation and preserve existing wetlands and waterways. These incentives contribute to more liveable neighbourhoods, reduce the need for environmental offsets, and avoid the long-term cost and inefficiency of compensatory re-planting programs.
- In terms of implementing a scheme across the State, the Law Society encourages government to adopt a strategic level approach to planning rather than a project-specific approach, which will support improved environmental outcomes. The scheme should align with the policies of government agencies relating to native vegetation ensuring a coordinated whole-of-government approach.

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- The proposed scheme should align with the 2024 recommendations of the Environmental Protection Authority to the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage on the Urban Greening Strategy, which included:
 - Developing efficient planning and approvals processes with the aim of eliminating duplication of assessment and approvals by the multiple government and stakeholder agencies implementing the scheme;
 - Prioritising planning which supports environmental considerations by identifying and minimising detrimental impacts on the local biodiversity of pilot locations and future sites across Western Australia;
 - Ensuring Public Open Space is clearly identified and distinguished within planning schemes.
- The Scheme should enable greater financial returns to the State where developers benefit from increased land value resulting from proximity of land to public transport infrastructure.
- The funding framework for a land rent scheme provides an opportunity for revenue raised to be applied towards addressing the critical shortage of social housing available for Western Australians who would not meet the criteria to be eligible for such a scheme.

Potential role of Keystart as a financing partner

- Keystart and other potential financing partners must be sufficiently regulated to ensure the terms of loans and financial agreements align with the purpose of the scheme, providing long term housing security and being responsive to changing economic conditions.

Schemes in other jurisdictions

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) implemented a Land Rent Scheme in July 2008. Subsequent reviews and reforms have identified several issues that should be considered in developing similar a scheme in Western Australia:

- The need for mandatory training to support applicants and stakeholders in navigating the scheme.
- Clear and easily accessible information and streamlining of application and assistance processes to reduce administrative costs to government.
- Minimising cancellation rates by making improvements to training and reducing the time between acceptance into the scheme, execution of contracts and final settlement.

If you have any queries or would like to further discuss the Society's submission, please contact Susie Moir, Director Advocacy and Professional Development on 9324 8646 or smoir@lawsocietywa.asn.au.

Yours sincerely



Judy McLean
President