

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate use

Public Health Association applauds budget announcement on warm state housing

The Public Health Association (PHA) is delighted that the budget will include \$53 million dollars to ensure every state housing tenant will be living in a warm, dry home within five years.

The National Executive Officer of the PHA, Dr Gay Keating, says research has found that for every dollar spent insulating a house there is a two dollar saving in health costs and days off work or school.

"We will all benefit from the dollars and cents savings created by this accelerated retrofitting programme, and not far down track," she says.

"Shelter and warmth (along with good food and clean air) are essential for health. Currently the taxpayer spends millions – possibly billions – on the long term damage that cold, draughty, damp homes do to their occupants, particularly children. Insulating our state houses makes good economic sense."

Dr Keating says that another gain from this programme is that occupants of state houses could pay up to 20 percent less on their power bills – no small thing as economic times get tougher.

"The irony is that people with higher incomes living in their own solid, warm homes pay less for their heating than many with lesser incomes living in cold rental houses. Retrofitting state houses will narrow the gap between the two groups, not just in what they pay for power, but also in doctor's visits and days off work.

"Now that the Government, as a landlord, is leading by example, the PHA would like to see more incentives put in place so that private landlords are encouraged to also insulate their houses."

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