

March 2025



# NSW Education Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2027



# Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we learn, work and live, paying respect to Elders past and present as teachers of knowledge, songlines and stories. We strive to ensure every NSW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander learner achieves their potential through education.



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# Foreword

We are proud to present the Education Housing Strategy and Action Plan for 2025–2027. This plan represents a joint commitment by the Department of Education and Homes NSW to address the unique housing challenges faced by educators in regional, rural and remote communities.

We know that access to quality housing is essential to attract and retain teachers at our rural schools. Ensuring our educators can live close to their school, in comfortable, affordable homes is critical to ensure quality education for our students. By creating an environment where our educators can thrive, we are fostering better workforce stability and continuity of student learning.

This strategy outlines a clear path forward, with practical steps to improve teacher housing across the state. Our departments have worked closely to ensure this strategy aligns with the Key Worker Housing Program and the broader needs of rural and remote communities, while responding to the needs of our tenants. To ensure we are meeting the expectations of the communities we serve, we will report on the strategy annually, with progress presented to the relevant governing bodies at the end of each year.

Teachers play a critical role in our rural communities. By addressing current housing challenges, we are not only supporting teachers but also laying the foundation for stronger, more resilient communities. Delivering on our strategic commitments means improving access to quality education and building a brighter future for students across the state.

**Prue Car**  
Deputy Premier and  
Minister for Education  
and Early Learning

**Rose Jackson**  
Minister for Housing

# Current state

Over **40%** of NSW public schools are located in regional, rural or remote locations. This accounts for almost **25%** of our students.

Regional, rural and remote schools employ

> **22,000**  
teachers



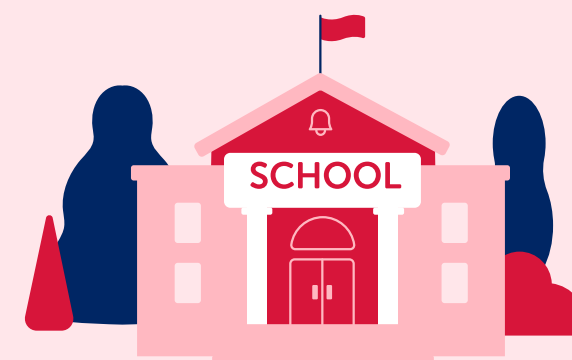
educating close to

**200,000**  
students



across more than

**970** schools



rural towns have  
teacher housing  
properties

schools have  
staff living in  
teacher housing

**1,380**

teacher housing  
properties

**2,600+**

tenant maintenance  
requests per year

**37 days**

on average to complete  
a maintenance request

**226**

properties in poor or  
critical condition

**59%**

tenant satisfaction rating  
of good or very good

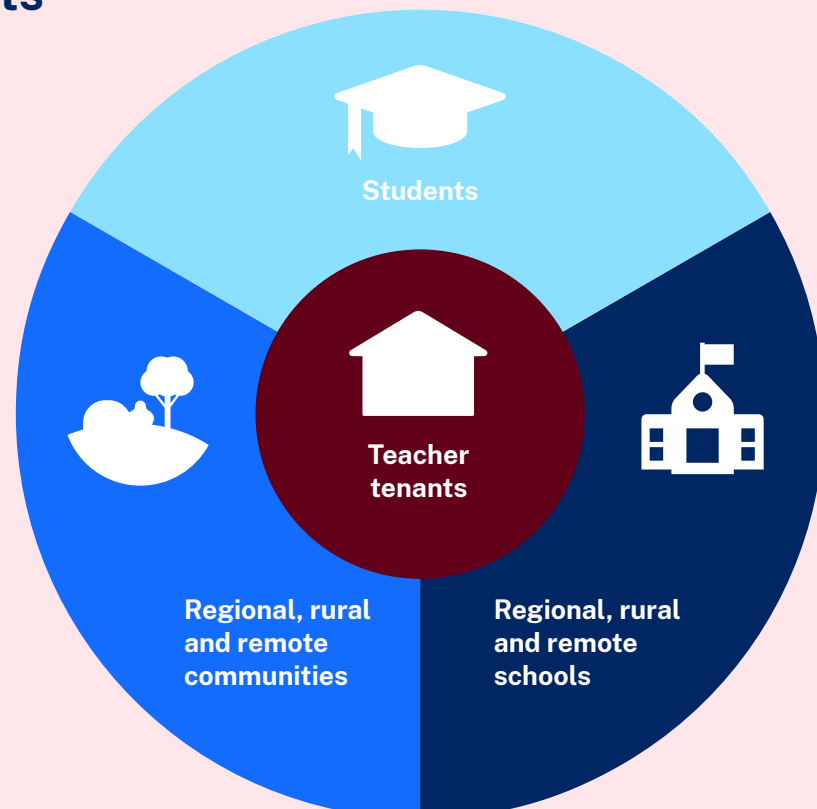
## Notes:



- The figures above are current as of 30 June 2024, unless specified below.
- The number of properties excludes blocks of land without dwellings.
- The number of maintenance request represents an average from 2022 to 2024.
- Completion time is measured from the date a maintenance request is raised, to the date the invoice for the completed works is received by the Teacher Housing Authority.



# Our vision

To ensure teachers in regional, rural and remote communities have access to quality, well-maintained housing close to where they work, to support their role as key workers in the community.

## Who benefits



-  **Teacher tenants** by ensuring access to quality, comfortable and secure housing
-  **Students** by improving access to quality education and continuity of learning

-  **Regional, rural and remote schools** by ensuring safe, quality housing is available to attract and retain teachers
-  **Regional, rural and remote communities** by providing essential services to help communities grow and thrive

## Shared goals

The Department of Education and Homes NSW are partnering to provide quality, comfortable and safe housing for teachers working in regional, rural, and remote schools. This is critical to staff our rural schools effectively.

Regional, rural and remote learning communities are a key equity group in [Our Plan for NSW Public Education](#). We are committed to ensuring

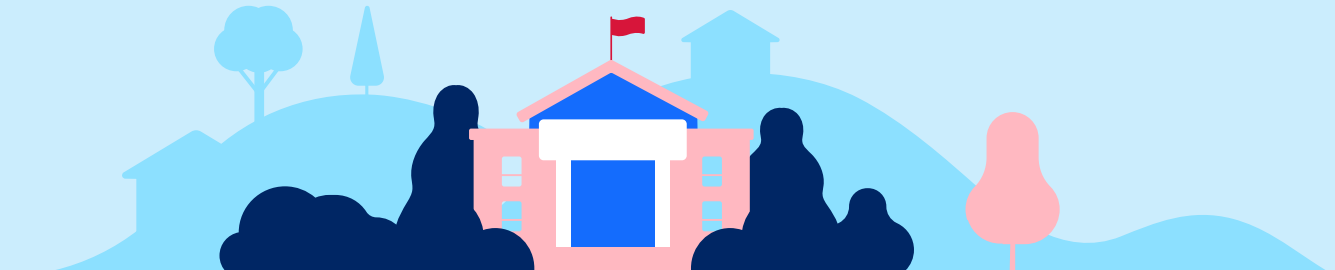
every student learns, grows and belongs in an outstanding education system.

Homes NSW's Key Worker Housing Program supports schools to attract staff, by providing housing across targeted rural locations. The Department of Education and Homes NSW share the goals of supporting quality educational outcomes and ensuring continuity of service.

## Existing challenges

While the Action Plan addresses a number of immediate priorities, we acknowledge there are existing challenges with providing housing in regional, rural and remote areas, and across the state more broadly, that impact the delivery of teacher housing. These include:

<b>Rising construction costs</b>  have increased the cost of new build and maintenance works, putting pressure on existing budgets and funding streams	<b>Limited availability of housing stock</b>  in many regional, rural and remote areas means there may be no other housing options for teachers moving to a new area	<b>Geographical isolation</b>  can make maintenance difficult, particularly in remote locations where tradespeople and managing agents are at a considerable distance
<b>Harsher climatic conditions</b>  such as extreme heat, and increased risk of fire, drought and flood can affect the longevity of properties	<b>Limited sharing opportunities</b>  are available between other essential worker housing due to separate management and systems	<b>Increased cost of living</b>  and housing prices means purchasing a home can be difficult, particularly for young professionals





# Our priorities

	<b>Enhanced portfolio</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Improve the quality of existing teacher housing and assess the need for additional supply to retain educators in regional, rural and remote areas.	Increasing the supply, quality and safety of teacher housing in regional, rural and remote NSW is vital to attract and retain educators. Housing availability, quality and security directly impact teachers' willingness to work and remain at rural schools. A stable, supported teaching workforce ensures continuity in education and fosters stronger academic outcomes.	The current budget for housing supply, renovation and maintenance is inadequate to meet current demand, meaning properties are falling short of required housing standards. Without sufficient investment in housing, it is challenging to provide and maintain properties at an acceptable standard, threatening the sustainability of education and limiting equitable opportunities for students and teachers in these communities.
	<b>Improved maintenance</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Facilitate operational improvements around maintenance timeframes and standards, management of agents and data sharing protocols.	Improving maintenance of teacher housing properties in regional, rural and remote NSW is key to enhancing the wellbeing and satisfaction of teacher tenants. Many rural areas face unique challenges due to their location and a shortage of tradespeople. These challenges can be addressed more effectively through more consistent and timely maintenance processes.	By streamlining communication and coordination between tenants, real estate agents, the Teacher Housing Authority and the Department of Education, maintenance issues can be resolved more efficiently. A well maintained and funded housing system not only improves teacher satisfaction but also contributes to lower turnover rates, creating a stable and thriving educational environment for students.
	<b>Strengthened support</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Provide support services that meet the needs of teacher tenants and integrate teacher housing into broader government initiatives to meet the holistic needs of regional communities.	Improving customer service to teacher housing tenants in regional, rural and remote NSW is essential for enhancing their experience. A customer-focused approach will provide clearer communication and more responsive maintenance processes, which can significantly boost teacher satisfaction and reduce turnover. This stability is crucial for creating a consistent and effective learning environment for students.	By enhancing tenant interfaces, access to housing services will become more efficient and user-friendly. Integrating teacher housing with broader government initiatives for essential workers can foster a stronger sense of community and collaboration. Increased responsiveness and clearer processes for tenancy applications and maintenance requests will address existing challenges.
	<b>Incentives and governance</b>	<b>Objective:</b> Support teachers to access housing through meaningful incentives; ensuring robust governance processes are in place to maximise efficiencies.	There is a significant opportunity to support teachers to access housing in regional, rural and remote NSW by enhancing incentives and streamlining processes. A joint commitment to transparency and collaboration will expedite work to address the urgent need for additional housing and the renovation of existing properties.	By working together we can improve housing availability and quality, ultimately strengthening the teacher workforce in regional, rural and remote areas. This partnership will not only optimise resource allocation but also assist learning communities, attracting and retaining qualified educators who can create stable and enriching environments for students. A coordinated approach has the potential to make a meaningful impact on teacher housing outcomes.

# Action schedule



## Enhanced portfolio

#	Action	Lead	Partners	Timeframe		
				2025	2026	2027
1.1	<b>Assess housing demand and staffing</b> Develop long-term staffing projections for schools to determine location-specific housing demand using research, data analysis and consultation with Directors Educational Leadership and principals.	Education	Homes NSW, Representative organisations	●	→	
1.2	<b>Improve management of property portfolio</b> Ensure property portfolio is fit for purpose and aligned with demand, though divesting, building and acquiring stock as appropriate, with the aim of increasing teacher housing supply over time.	Homes NSW	Education	●	→	
1.3	<b>Support Key Worker Housing Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement Key Worker Housing Program through department agreements, the Key Worker Housing Project Delivery Group and other forums.</li> <li>Collaborate on education-specific requirements that inform the development of a whole-of-government operating model for key worker housing.</li> </ul>	Homes NSW	Education	●	●	
1.4	<b>Innovative solutions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the use of temporary and/or moveable dwellings to address the unique challenges of remote areas.</li> <li>Develop a policy with criteria and budget to support the relocation of buildings.</li> </ul>	Homes NSW	Education, Local Councils	●	→	
1.5	<b>Maintain design guide</b> Review the Key Worker Housing Design Guide annually to ensure it continues to align with the needs of teachers in regional, rural and remote locations.	Homes NSW	Education, Representative organisations	●	→	
1.6	<b>Streamline housing needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a process map to simplify identification of housing needs.</li> <li>Develop a prioritisation matrix to facilitate decision-making around location of new supply and refurbishments.</li> </ul>	Education	Homes NSW	●		
1.7	<b>Advocate for reform</b> Support relevant planning reforms to expedite processes and incentivise key worker housing development.	Homes NSW	Education, Representative organisations	●	→	
1.8	<b>Investigate cross-sector partnerships</b> Explore opportunities for collaboration with private sector developers and local industries to co-invest in regional housing projects.	Homes NSW	Education, Local Councils, Private Sector, Primary Industries and Regional Development		●	→



## Improved maintenance

#	Action	Lead	Partners	Timeframe		
				2025	2026	2027
2.1	<b>Asset improvement</b> Develop and implement a comprehensive renovation plan, informed by survey results and data, to raise the average Asset Condition Rating of properties to 80/100 (or equivalent).	Homes NSW	Education, Managing agents	●		
2.2	<b>Integrated assessment practices</b> Investigate the methodology for asset assessment to ensure consistency with housing portfolios across Homes NSW.	Homes NSW	Education	●	→	
2.3	<b>Faster response times</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledgement of maintenance requests within 48 hours.</li> <li>Reduce the time taken to complete tenant maintenance requests, working to a target of a 25% reduction by 2027.</li> </ul>	Homes NSW	Education, Managing agents	●	→	
2.4	<b>Partner for maintenance</b> Facilitate collaboration between managing agents and asset management teams to improve property management and maintenance services in regional, rural and remote locations.	Education	Homes NSW, Managing agents	●	→	
2.5	<b>Coordinate schedules</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create forward schedules for maintenance activities during school holidays</li> <li>Develop a process for Education to advise Homes NSW of scheduled works in regional, rural and remote schools to increase efficiency of contractors already in location.</li> </ul>	Homes NSW, Education	Managing agents	●	→	
2.6	<b>Review maintenance model</b> Review the maintenance processes across government key worker housing portfolio to ensure a fit-for-purpose maintenance model is employed.	Homes NSW	Education	●	→	
2.7	<b>Enhance scheduled inspections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a process including checklist for kerbside inspections.</li> <li>Implement a schedule of regular inspections by asset management teams, with outcomes shared with Homes NSW.</li> </ul>	Education	Teacher Housing Authority, Managing agents	●	→	
2.8	<b>Standardised approach to maintenance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to improve existing processes for renovations and maintenance of properties including timelines, accountability and access, to increase consistency across the state.</li> <li>Update the design and specification guide for existing housing stock to align with key elements of the Key Worker Housing Design Guide for New Supply to improve and standardise the tenant experience.</li> </ul>	Homes NSW	Education		●	→
2.9	<b>Improve tenant reporting</b> Update tenant checklists for reporting maintenance issues during tenancy and on exit to better plan for maintenance works.	Homes NSW	Education		●	
2.10	<b>Cross-agency collaboration</b> Increase collaboration and data sharing on property portfolio to inform the development of programs and projects and improve tenant satisfaction.	Homes NSW	Education	●	→	
2.11	<b>Engage TAFE students</b> Explore opportunities for TAFE and VET students studying construction to participate in maintenance activities to support their studies and improve maintenance response times.	Education	Homes NSW, TAFE NSW			●



## Strengthened support

#	Action	Lead	Partners	Timeframe		
				2025	2026	2027
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Improving housing interfaces</b> Implement best practice for housing tenancy support including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing customer service channels including internet and intranet pages</li> <li>Improving the online housing portal</li> <li>Forward planning and communicating tenancy officer visits in regional, rural and remote locations.</li> </ul>	Homes NSW	Education			
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Enforce performance measures</b> Strengthen enforcement of performance measures in managing agents' agreements to improve tenant satisfaction.	Homes NSW	Education, Managing agents			
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Gather tenant feedback</b> Undertake annual tenant surveys and establish appropriate feedback loops with tenants following survey responses.	Homes NSW	Education, Representative organisations, Homes NSW			
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Clear communication</b> Improve messaging on rental valuations, adjustments, subsidies and maintenance processes to provide clear, timely communication to tenants.	Homes NSW, Education				
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Streamlining turnover</b> Improve tenancy turnover processes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing a process for principals to notify Homes NSW of teacher movements or exit intentions.</li> <li>Reviewing and updating policies to enable flexibility for short-term teacher contracts and extensions.</li> </ul>	Education	Homes NSW, Principals			
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Align staffing and housing timelines</b> Develop processes to align recruitment and housing offers to support attraction of teachers to regional, rural and remote schools.	Education	Homes NSW			
<b>3.7</b>	<b>NSW Welcome Experience</b> Promote The Welcome Experience to teachers relocating to relevant regional, rural and remote locations to boost teacher retention by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>linking local connectors with principal networks</li> <li>providing information in letters of offer</li> </ul>	Education	Representative organisations, Primary Industries and Regional Development			
<b>3.8</b>	<b>Assess housing eligibility</b> Investigate extending housing eligibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>school support staff</li> <li>early childhood educators</li> <li>inner regional locations</li> </ul>	Education	Homes NSW			
<b>3.9</b>	<b>Create community hubs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the establishment of central community hubs in larger centres for remote teachers to foster a sense of community.</li> <li>Consider options for implementing a policy to support teachers in larger homes to host visiting teachers.</li> </ul>	Education	Homes NSW, Representative organisations, Primary Industries and Regional Development			
<b>3.10</b>	<b>Steering Committee Leadership</b> Manage a cross-government steering body for key worker housing.	Homes NSW	Education			



## Incentives and governance

#	Action	Lead	Partners	Timeframe		
				2025	2026	2027
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Collaborate to guide investment</b> Use data-driven projections to maintain and increase current housing stock.	Homes NSW, Education				
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Collaborative procurement</b> Investigate procurement options across new supply and maintenance programs to improve efficiencies across government agencies.	Homes NSW	Education, NSW Health, Police, Communities and Justice			
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Implement revised incentives</b> Implement revised incentives that reflect the current needs of regional, rural and remote teachers, aimed at bolstering attraction and retention.	Education	Representative organisations			
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Incentivise teacher retention</b> Investigate further housing incentives to attract and retain teachers in regional, rural and remote areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rent-to-buy schemes</li> <li>expanded incentives</li> <li>supporting teachers already in location</li> </ul>	Education	Homes NSW, Representative organisations			
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Promote incentives</b> Promote available incentives to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching graduates to attract pre-service teachers to regional, rural and remote areas.</li> <li>The wider teaching community to ensure maximum take up of available supports</li> </ul>	Education	Representative organisations			
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Review authorising remit</b> Refine governance arrangements as required to meet future housing priorities.	Homes NSW	Education			

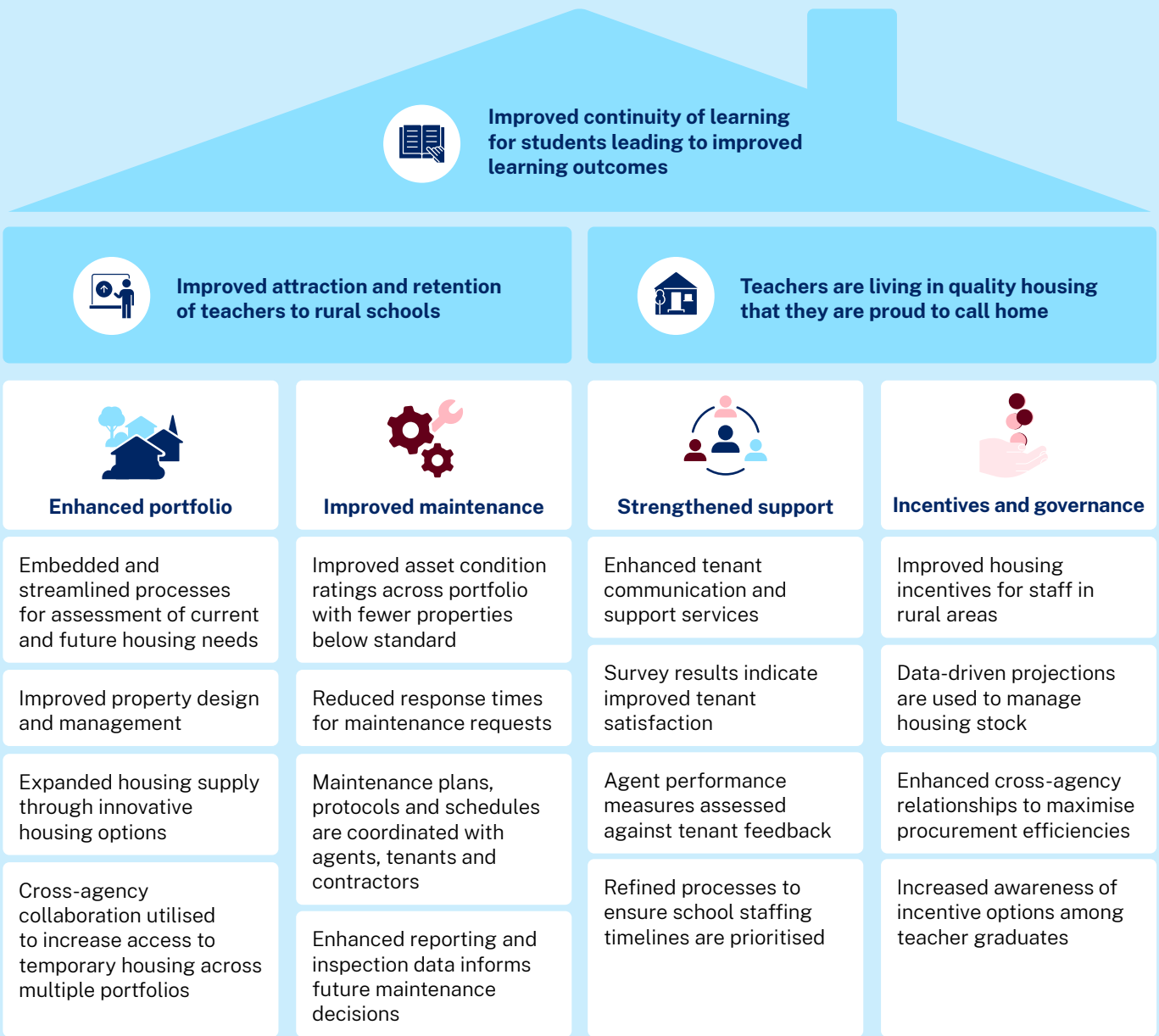


Priority actions - these actions have been identified as key deliverables under each priority.

Representative organisations could include the Secondary Principals' Council, Primary Principals' Association, NSW Teachers Federation and NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. Representative organisations may support the delivery of these actions through the provision of research, information sharing, contribution to reporting requirements or promotion through their members.



# What does success look like?





We acknowledge the homelands of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and pay our respect to Country.

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