



newsletter

WA STAYS ON SONG AND AVOIDS RECESSION AT YEAR END JUNE 2009

WA Social Housing Taskforce Final Report Anticipated

The WA Housing Taskforce convened by the Minister for Housing the Hon. Troy Buswell and chaired by Anglicare WA CEO Ian Carter is working hard to deliver the Final Report by June 30. The Taskforce's terms of reference include exploring international models of affordable housing provision, proposed funding models that identify innovative approaches, and overall strategies to better manage supply, allocations and transition points. The Taskforce has also been looking at planning issues including a multi-unit housing code, density bonus and mixed rental developments.

Alongside this work many local governments have been reviewing their Town Planning Schemes with a view to understanding emerging affordable housing needs in their communities and identifying suitable sites for affordable housing development.

Shelter WA eagerly awaits the results of the Taskforce which has included consultation with many stakeholders and interested parties by the dedicated secretariat team.

Affordable Housing – Where are they building?

The WA Minister for Housing Hon Troy Buswell has committed to bringing forward \$316M from forward budgets to deliver more than 1000 new homes across the state. 600 of these homes will be available to applicants on the Homeswest waiting list and 400 will

be built in country areas to accommodate Government Regional Officers. The Commonwealth Social Housing Initiative funding to WA provides \$606.1M for new construction through 2011-12 and \$40.5M for repairs and maintenance until 09-10 a total of \$646.6M over the next four years.

This is in addition to the construction of up to 4,200 new dwellings and repairs and upgrades to 4,800 remote indigenous houses across Australia by 2018 through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing.

Region	Unit Numbers
Metro North	295
Metro South	130
Metro Southeast	125
Total Metro	550
Albany	40
Bunbury	40
Wheatbelt	81
Goldfields	40
Midwest/Gascoyne	40
Pilbara	134
Kimberley	84
Total Country	459
Total	1,009

From: www.wa.gov.au media statements 2nd Feb and State Budget Media Release 14th May 2009.

"In 2009-10, the Department of Housing budget will be more than \$1.9billion, with \$1billion being spent on capital programs involving the State-wide construction of dwellings and the development of land.

"We have committed \$316million of State funds for the construction of 1,009 dwellings in 2009-10, which includes \$116million for 609 new social housing dwellings across the State.

"The additional \$200million will be drawn from the Royalties for Regions fund to provide 400 new houses for essential Government officers in rural and remote areas."

The Department of Housing will spend \$100million on maintenance and improvements, with approximately half of this expenditure occurring in regional areas.

A total of \$175.6million will be spent on indigenous housing, which included maintenance, infrastructure works and the remote areas essential services program.

"Partnership between the State and Commonwealth will see at least 3,000 additional dwellings built throughout WA over the four years from 2008-09.

"In addition to the 609 social housing dwellings funded by the State in 2009-10, Commonwealth funding will allow the procurement of a further 1,500 dwellings over this financial year."

An initial \$70million has already been approved by the Federal Government for the immediate construction of 286 dwellings across the State, with the State Government contributing land worth \$40million.

The Commonwealth would also provide \$20.2million for repairs and maintenance to 192 dwellings across the State, with work scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2010.

In this Issue

1. WA Housing Taskforce News Anticipated	2. Affordable Housing - Where are they building?
3. Recent Shelter WA Forum Briefs	4. CoAG Reform Agenda - Consumer Voices
5. Homeless Persons Week	6. Anti Poverty Week
7. Launch of WA Mental Health Strategic Plan	8. Have Your Say about Mental Health Services
9. Shelter WA Conference Presentations	10. Centrelink Non-Discrimination of Same Sex Couples
11. More Centrelink Initiatives	12. National Housing News
13. Conferences of Interest	14. News from Shelter WA and Shelter in the News

Recent Shelter WA Forums

We have held two forums recently which were well attended and evaluated positively by participants. The National Shelter **Seniors Housing Consultation** supported by FHaCSIA was held on 11th May, 2009 and involved over 20 participants. Roland Naufal facilitated the discussion and skilfully gathered input to include in the final national report currently being prepared. The literature review that informed the presentation can be found on the Shelter WA website here:

<http://www.shelterwa.org.au/forums.html>

A focus discussion held on June 2nd invited participants to consider **consumer participation in the field of affordable housing**. Consumer participation is increasingly recognised as an essential ingredient for delivering appropriate services and ensuring value for money and best practice. A customer service focus and market research product testing are routinely applied to private sector goods and services (and reported on by CHOICE and other fair trading bodies) but have not yet been fully embraced in public and non-government activities. Some organisations seek and value their clients' input, and voluntarily adopt consultative mechanisms by undertaking customer satisfaction surveys and having complaints and grievance policies, but the practice of involving and including consumers in the governance or quality improvement processes of organisations is variable.

The 22 participants in the focus discussion identified issues of power differential and risk, the need for high level champions to facilitate consumer participation, the difference in being representative 'for' and representative 'of', challenges inherent in conflicts of interest and vested interests, the need for community development models to identify and support natural leaders, payments and incentives, the barriers of professional language and homelessness to participation, and the necessary role of partnerships, trust and respect. The presentation

can be found on our website and a full report is being prepared.

CoAG Reform Agenda – Consumer Voices Consultation

'In the context of the current wide-ranging reforms to Australia's consumer policy framework, the Australian Government is seeking the views of interested parties on sustaining consumer advocacy and consumer-policy-focused research'.

Australia's new consumer policy framework is planned to be fully operational when the Australian Consumer Law is implemented nationally and in all States and Territories by the end of 2010.

The Treasurer of the Australian Government in conjunction with the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs, the Productivity Commission and the Commonwealth Consumer Affairs Advisory Council are undertaking consultation guided by the issues paper found here: http://www.treasury.gov.au/documents/1532/PDF/Issues_paper_Consumer_voices.pdf

To contribute to this consultation download the paper and submit your comments by 17th July. Shelter WA will be convening a Forum to progress participation in this important initiative.

Homeless Persons Week

This year Homeless Persons Week coincides with Missing Persons Week and will be happening between **August 3rd and 8th**.

Again this year, the Community Housing Coalition will be coordinating the 'Drop your Jocks' campaign to encourage donations of new underwear for homeless people and those in crisis and emergency accommodation handled by local ABC shops and regional broadcast stations. The City of Perth and local services, government providers and others will participate in the launch event, opened by the Minister for Child Protection, the Hon Robyn McSweeney MLC, on Monday, August 3, 2009, at Forrest Place in Perth's CBD. Street Choirs, Foodbank healthy food and other activities promise a fun day. For more information or to register your interest contact CHCWA

Policy Officer Gerhard Rousseau on policy@communityhousing.com.au

Anti Poverty Week

Anti Poverty Week happens in mid October and this year it will be the week of 11-17th October. Shelter WA, together with WACOSS and other organisations are starting to think about activities and opportunities. See the website here: <http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au/> Watch this space for updates!

Launch of WA Mental Health Strategic Plan

The WA Minister for Mental Health, the Hon Graham Jacobs MLA will be launching the State Mental Health Policy and Strategic Plan 2010-20 on Wednesday 10th June 9:00am at the Boulevard Centre in Floreat Park. The Plan will '*guide the reform and redesign of mental health services and investment in mental health in WA. Major systems reconfiguration and shifting from a response based on illness and acute intervention to one focussing on wellness, early intervention and recovery is anticipated to achieve significant gains.*'

To attend the launch and hear about how you can participate in the consultation process email: mentalhealthreception.royalst@health.wa.gov.au or telephone 9222 4099.

Have Your Say about Mental Health Services in WA

Price Waterhouse Coopers has been appointed to undertake a comprehensive review of mental health services and assist with the development of an overarching policy framework to guide mental health reform in WA. For more details about this survey and the opportunity contribute see: www.pwc.com/mentalhealthsurvey

Shelter WA Conference Presentations

Shelter WA has been busily submitting abstracts to present papers at two conferences to be held in WA. The first presentation will be to the **11th Trans Tasman Community Psychology Conference** "Exploring Boundaries, Expanding Frontiers" 15-17th July 2009 University of Notre Dame 19 Mouat Street, Fremantle WA 6959 and will

deliver an overview of the consultation held last year with workers in International Humanitarian Settlement Services exploring *Gaps in Housing and Support Services for Humanitarian Entrants. Consultation Forum Results and Recommendations*. The full report can be found here: http://www.shelterwa.org.au/publication/papers_reports/2008/Gaps_in_Housing_and_Support_for_Humanitarian_Communities.pdf.

The next Conference Shelter WA has been accepted to present a paper is the **TheMHS conference which is being held at the Perth Convention Centre 1-4 September**. The presentation will focus on Housing Policy, Mental Illness and Homelessness, Consumers, Social Justice and Social Inclusion. This paper will look at the prevalence of mental illness in WA and the continuum of housing options for people living with mental illness. Consideration will be given to the CoAG Reform Agenda, the National Mental Health Strategy and the WA 2006 review of the Independent Living Program, together with a discussion of homelessness and a comparison of subsidies to supported accommodation providers across a number of service groups including aged care, disability and youth. Early bird registration closes on the 17th July. To register visit the website: <http://www.themhs.org/09-annual-conference>

Centrelink Policy Changes for Same Sex Couples

Centrelink will commence treating same-sex couples the same as heterosexual married and de-facto couples from July 1st 2009. A national campaign is underway to inform Centrelink customers of the new policies and the need to declare assets and income of both people in same-sex couples who live together. The anomaly in Centrelink policy that allowed same-sex relationships to be ignored was a result of antiquated legislation. An *Information Session about the Removal of Same Sex Discrimination Legislation 2009* will be held on Monday 15th June at 10:00am in Centrelink State Office

level 5, 200 St Georges Terrace Perth. To attend this session email michelle.l.kelly@centrelink.gov.au by Wednesday 10th June.

More Centrelink Initiatives

Centrelink in WA continues looking at ways to improve service responses to people receiving income support and those agencies and organisations working with them. The **Centrelink Community Consultative Committee** is a quarterly meeting that brings together non-government and government representatives to raise issues impacting on Centrelink customers. Its terms of reference are

- To provide feedback to Centrelink about service delivery issues and to suggest enhancements to the standard of service
- To seek comment from committee members on the relevance and suitability of customer service strategies and the impact of those strategies at the local level
- To consult with stakeholders about proposed and upcoming policy and procedural changes and identify any areas of concern
- To promote awareness of Centrelink's procedures and decision making practices to members of the Committee.

The CCCC also reports on 3 subcommittees;

- **Seniors & Carers Consultative Forum**
- **Mental Health Consultative Forum**
- **People with a Disability Forum**

In addition, responding to the Social Inclusion Agenda and Commonwealth government recommendations contained in the White Paper; The Road Home, the WA CCCC has recently convened a Homelessness Reference Group and developed draft terms of reference.

Shelter WA together with Dept Child Protection representatives, Salvation Army, Anglicare WA, the Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service and others were active participants in these initiatives.

Together we look forward to furthering the overarching aim of this group

For Centrelink, peak bodies, service providers, state and local government to work collaboratively to reduce and prevent homelessness in WA.

These committees are in addition to the Centrelink Mobile Outreach Teams, and the contact people within each regional office and those with statewide responsibilities for program areas.

If you or your organization feel you should be involved in this Committee, or any of the Centrelink consultative forums email with your interest to loretta.l.giuntini@centrelink.gov.au

National Housing News

On the national front Shelter WA was disappointed in the failure of the Australian Government to reinstate funding to National Shelter in the last budget. Despite lacking resources, Adrian Pisarski, National Shelter's Chairman continues to lobby the Tanya Plibersek, Minister for Housing and FHACSIA to reintroduce funding to national consumer advocacy peaks.

Currently National Shelter is looking at the Tax Review and possible changes to the treatment of housing assets, negative gearing and NRAS, the Seniors Housing Project, Indigenous Community Housing Organisations, compulsory rent deductions, tenancy databases, planning issues, workforce disincentives, public housing stigma and the role of Peaks in the NAHA environment. A face-to-face strategic and policy platform meeting is scheduled for late July when we will attempt to articulate a national shelter housing policy platform. To see what else National Shelter has been doing, visit the website here: <http://www.shelter.org.au/>

Conferences of Interest

The **4th Australasian Housing Researchers Conference** is being held in Sydney 5-7th August. To register follow this link: <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/seminars/ahrc-apnhr>

Conferences of Interest

The **6th National Housing Conference** is being held in Melbourne 24-27th November. Early bird registrations close on 30th June. To find out more about this conference follow the link:

<http://www.nationalhousingconference.org.au/>

The **Australasian Research Alliance for Children and Youth** (ARACY) is holding a conference 'Making Prevention Work' at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

2-4th September 2009. Early bird registrations close July 3rd. For more information check out the website:

<http://www.aracyconference.org.au/>

News from Shelter WA

Shelter WA is currently enjoying the results of our successful **LotteryWest IT grant**. New desktop computers, a new small business server, a printer, contemporary software and a laptop with remote access will enable Shelter to work more efficiently with less

downtime, no computer crashes and more reliable email and website management. Shelter WA gratefully acknowledges LotteryWest and the people of WA for providing the funds that allowed this upgrade.

Selection and recruitment to the vacant **Research Manager position** in Shelter WA is progressing. A small but strong pool of candidates is being evaluated for interview and we look forward to welcoming a new member to the team in the next few weeks.

The **Affordable Housing Consumer Participation scoping project** in conjunction with WACOSS and supported by the Peaks Forum with funding from LotteryWest is also considering Project Officer candidates to commence work. The Scoping project will be looking at community and government support for, need, viability, overlaps with existing consumer participation mechanisms and possible funding sources

Shelter WA in the Media

Page 9 Perth Voice Feb 7, 2009
Housing promise welcomed

by KATIE BASTIANS

PERTH lord mayor Lisa Scaffidi might be steaming over the Barnett government's plan to downsize Labor's foreshore plans for the city but Shelter WA is pleased with the Lib-Nats for putting more emphasis on public housing.

Premier Colin Barnett said the

construction of 600 Homeswest homes and 400 houses for government employees in regional areas would be brought forward to help stimulate WA's stalling economy.

"Shelter welcomes this announcement together with a previous announcement from minister [Troy] Buswell to build an additional 20,000 units of social housing by 2020," said Shelter WA chief Bronwyn Kitching.

She also rejoiced in prime minister

Kevin Rudd's announcement on Tuesday of a \$42 billion nation-building and jobs package, particularly its focus on the homeless and low-income households.

However, she wants banks and the financial sector to make social benefit-housing a more viable investment opportunity, particularly for Australia's retiring and ageing population, and says landlords still need to be whipped into shape with more regulation to stop them exploiting vulnerable tenants.

Men more likely to be on streets

by KATIE BASTIANS

EVER wondered why there are more homeless men than women?

"Family and friends are more likely to offer a temporary couch surf to women than to men," Shelter WA chief Bronwyn Kitching said.

Also, WA's support services such as shelters for women escaping domestic violence were unusually good compared with other states.

In her 10 years as co-ordinator of a homeless support program for people over 55, Ms Kitching had found women

sought help earlier. "[Women] were more likely to reach out for assistance to get through a hiccup in their lives rather than a whole lot of help for many different aspects," she said.

Many female clients she'd dealt with had suffered a sudden illness, death of a partner or another unanticipated event such as a sudden rent hike or eviction.

"It's not just to ask for help from friends or seek assistance through services until it is really a huge problem. The schools have to all fall off their shoulders before inertia is overcome."

Other homeless men tended to be trouble, had neglected legal problems

and their health, abused substances, didn't have good personal care and were estranged from families.

Mary had "worked away" on the mines in the military, where others had worked and cleaned for years and managed their day-to-day affairs.

"[They] are at a complete loss when they have to manage all these things themselves on a reduced income especially if they have never married or are divorced."

Ms Kitching said the new and growing level of young homeless was a by-product from the recent combination of mining and construction in WA.

I'd be in trouble if I were vain and self conscious (check out grim face on the following pages!)

Flats needed: welfare chief

by KATIE BASTIANS

WELFARE advocates have slammed Vincent town council and Perth Labor MP John Hyde for opposing an eight-storey block of Homeswest flats planned for North Perth.

Bronwyn Kitching, the head of homeless lobby Shelter WA, says the development is needed to address Perth's chronic shortage of affordable housing.

"Maybe some of those units will house the retired parents who have lost their superannuation income," she said. "We need to challenge the 'us and them mentality', after all - a society is all of us."

Excessively dense

Mr Hyde says he isn't opposed to a Homeswest development at the site, a mega-block running between Fitzgerald Street and Pandal Lane, but the one approved - over the objections of Vincent town council - is "excessively dense".

He says the Barnett's government is so eager to build 1000 affordable homes it is bulldozing local community concerns into the ground.

Vincent says the planned building is too big for the area.

"There is always going to be tension for governments between what existing residents want to protect and maintain in their localities and what the community actually needs," Ms Kitching said, adding she was sick of "not in my backyard" complaints.

WA housing minister Troy Buswell told Mr Hyde in parliament the government would do "whatever it takes" to deliver more public housing.

But Mr Hyde said locals



• Shelter WA chief Bronwyn Kitching is tired of "not in my backyard" complaints about Homeswest projects.

should not be ignored. The development threatened privacy as it would overlook the neighbouring Parkview Apartments and Maltings complex.

Ms Kitching said people on low incomes needed to be close to public amenities, not banished to the outer suburbs just so inner-city residents could keep their views.

Perth Voice Page 6 Mar 21, 2009

Photo by S. DAN, Wembley

No excuse for having homeless in Perth

I AM absolutely ashamed to be a human being in this state.

There are homeless everywhere and we all sit on our collective bums and do nothing.

On TV recently a Warwick family was put out into the cold so developers could improve their bottom line. As Henry VIII might have said: "A pox on the developers."

I took a drive around Middle Swan and Upper Swan recently and found three unoccupied houses on two to three-acre blocks. Why?

Can the Swan City bureaucrats not open up these houses and put in responsible families for, say, \$200-\$250 a week?

Put a roof over their heads, no excuses, just do it. Forget the rules, this is an emergency matter.

I'm sure we all know of houses that are empty. Report the address to your MP and get him or her moving, starting with a central register.

Also, homeless in the CBD? Rubbish.

At last count there were 30-plus church-owned buildings within a 4km radius of the central railway

station. They are rarely used after 10pm and are rarely empty, being church property.

Can some bureaucrats leave their cubicle, walk up to a map and decide a plan of action?

A local person can act as caretaker, roll call, army beds, meals on wheels, etc, and, voila! Problem solved.

Wake up, Perth. Sydney did it for Youth Week and the Pope's visit in 2008 and so can we.

Don't form another committee, just do it.

FRANK LARSEN, Banksia Grove

THE SUNDAY TIMES, perthnow.com.au

May 24th 2009

Thanks Troy, but more needs doing

by ANDREW BUTLER

PERTH'S peak welfare groups have commended WA treasurer Troy Buswell for doing the best he could to deal with the budget deficit, rising homelessness levels amidst pessimistic economic conditions.

But they say the government should take every opportunity it can find to put more resources into providing help.

"Things are going to get worse before they get better," Shelter WA chair Bronwyn Kitching said. "We were talking 20,000 people on the public housing waiting list at the beginning of the year. We're probably talking about 21,500 now. It's growing."

The WA Council of Social Services (WACS) had recommended 1000 social housing homes to be included in the budget to assist the state's property problems.

Crucial that were included but the treasurer has an eye on making many accommodations for government workers in WA's regions.

"I think the difficulty is the state and the federal governments have been doing a lot to try and ensure affordable housing but the conditions that are affecting people getting into homes are just as quickly pushing families out of homes they can't hold on to," CEO Sue Ash said.

Ms Kitching and Ms Ash said the Social Housing Taskforce had mapped out where social housing was required and more consistent new homes would be deployed, mainly



Photo: Bruce Bayle, SAH May 15, 2009

• Bronwyn Kitching has commended WA treasurer Troy Buswell for doing his best for social housing in tough times.

"There's a recognition that relocating poverty to the fringe of our society just increases poverty," Ms Kitching said.

"We are seeing integration for

transport and security. There's a lot of work being done now on public lands. Creek, government and state land and whether it can be developed."

Shelter WA

Shelter WA is Western Australia's peak independent housing organisation. Shelter represents the views of consumers and community groups on major housing issues. Shelter WA aims to ensure that every person has access to affordable, appropriate, secure and safe housing that is free from discrimination.

We do this through:

- coordinating and representing community sector views to government;
 - developing and responding to policy;
 - providing education and information; and
 - promoting alternative housing models.

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