



Shelter WA Newsletter

June 2011

Shelter WA Membership Renewals

Shelter WA Membership Renewals are due and will be sent out soon.

To confirm your Shelter WA membership for 2011-2012 please contact Corinne at Shelter on 9325 6660 or email shelterwa@shelterwa.org.au

WA Residential Tenancies Act 2011 Amendment Bill

The long awaited WA Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2011 was tabled in Parliament on 18 May 2011. The Bill proposes to introduce legislative amendments to 'provide greater balance between the rights and obligations of tenants and lessors and enhance the clarity and effectiveness of the legislation'. This legislation will impact a wide population – nearly a third of WA households are renters.

While some tenant consumer protections will potentially be strengthened, including regulation of tenancy databases, better management for bond money lodgement and release and prohibition of landlords 'contracting out' of provisions in the Act, other proposed amendments are a tightening of the punitive 'three strikes' antisocial and disruptive behaviour policies in Department of Housing public rental dwellings.

Documents on the Parliament of Western Australia website relating to the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2011 are [here](#)

Shelter WA is concerned that some proposed amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act WA 1987 contained in the Bill currently before the Legislative Assembly are unfair and onerous and will further compromise the housing outcomes of the most disadvantaged households in our community.

Shelter WA together with WACOSS, the Tenants Advice Service and the Community Housing Coalition worked for several years between 2004 and 2008 on the 'No Room in the Boom' campaign and several key messages developed to strengthen consumer protections in residential tenancy law were defined. The issues relating to the RTA were:

- A lack of consumer protections for boarders and lodgers (the RTA is silent on the topic of Boarders and Lodgers, any definition, any rights or responsibilities and any terms of an agreement or contract between a person and a proprietor to reside in a dwelling as a boarder or lodger)
- Lack of legislative protections over information held on Residential Tenant Databases
- Lack of consumer protections over excessive rent increases
- The practice by Real Estate Agents of levying an 'Option' fee on rental applicants in order to validate an expression of interest / application for entering into a Residential Tenancy Agreement in a rental property.

Most of these longstanding concerns have not been addressed in proposed 2011 amendments.

Shelter WA also held a position on the Equal Opportunity Commission S80 Implementation and Monitoring Committee *Finding a Place: An Inquiry into the Existence of Discriminatory Practices in Relation to the Provision of Public Housing and Related Services to Aboriginal People in Western Australia*. The final report of this committee was released in March 2011 by Commissioner Henderson. Many of the proposed RTA amendments would be counterproductive and undo the gains made from the work of this committee to remove discrimination in social housing.

1. Shelter WA Membership Renewals Due	2. Shelter WA Response: RTA 2011
3. WA Government State Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-2020	4. Boarders & Lodgers Working Group
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The concerns Shelter WA has about specific 2011 RTA amendments are presented in a document currently in draft form to be finalised during July, however the broad concerns we have are as follows:

- Shelter WA does not support 'without cause' or 'no cause' evictions of eligible households from social housing tenancies. We are of the opinion that all eviction processes from subsidised social housing must be just, fair and transparent and provide the tenant with opportunity to remediate, ameliorate and address the reason for any breach.
- Shelter WA does not support proceeding with eviction due to temporary overcrowding of social housing tenancies. Overcrowding, particularly in Aboriginal households, is most often a compassionate social support response by families and friends to homelessness, financial housing stress and other life crisis experienced by their loved ones.
- Shelter WA does not support evictions of social housing tenancies that include dependent children for any reason. We believe that all efforts should be taken to sustain a troubled family tenancy in order to support the health, educational and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable children.
- Shelter WA does not support the imposition of a higher burden of compliance on social housing tenancies. Adequate residential tenancy regulation and subsequent compliance assurance must be standard, fair and impartial. We believe that government run public housing and community housing providers should be model landlords and do not need to exempt themselves from tenancy legislation.
- Shelter WA does not support the application in the RTA of a harsher legal definition of 'nuisance' or of 'objectionable' or of 'anti-social' behaviour. Many social housing applicants, as a feature of the characteristics that prove their eligibility for social housing disclose physical or intellectual disability, a diagnosis of severe or profound mental illness, a culturally or linguistically diverse background, a history of incarceration or removal as a child from family into 'Care of the State'. These households and individuals live under a greater burden of social exclusion, poverty and disadvantage than the wider community. Shelter WA believes that a civilised society responds with compassion, understanding and tolerance to the occasional low-level disruption that may be caused when untoward chaotic life events impact these households and their personal distress is locally radiated.

Shelter WA's policy position is that organisations in receipt of taxpayer funding and state or commonwealth subsidy to assist in the provision of social housing and related support to households in greatest need should hold those households' needs paramount, and work to sustain the tenancies as the priority.

To view Shelter WA's draft submission see it on our website [here](#)

Comments to be considered for inclusion can be sent to us at shelterwa@shelterwa.org.au

WA Government Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-2020: Opening Doors to Affordable Housing

Opening Doors to Affordable Housing, the WA Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-2020 was released by the State government on May 11th 2011. Shelter WA, along with other housing stakeholders and interested peaks welcome the broad directions contained in the Strategy and the supporting initiatives identified.

Particularly pleasing are:

- The commitment to maintain and increase Keystart home-loans and shared equity home ownership schemes.
- The commitment that residential developments on government land will require that 15% affordable land and housing is provided.
- The announcement of a subsidised private rental brokerage scheme.
- Land release of affordable land lots.
- Responses to the housing needs of key workers and others in high cost rent and regional areas.
- Strengthening planning reforms to facilitate increased timely supply of diverse smaller dwelling types.
- Forming and implementing an improved social housing demand model.
- Developing a waiting list applicant matching system to efficiently allocate appropriate housing best suited to households needs – a housing needs register.

Shelter WA will be monitoring implementation of this strategy and we strongly endorse the vision of at least 20,000 additional new dwellings that are affordable for low and moderate income households by 2020.

Read the full report [here](#) The summary can be accessed [here](#) and the non-government Info Sheet is [here](#)

Throughout the year, Shelter WA and Tenants Advice Service convened the Boarders and Lodgers Working Group. Community service providers, advocacy NGOs, and university housing administrators formed the Boarders and Lodgers Working Group in April 2010 out of a shared concern about the lack of legal protection offered to boarders and lodgers in Western Australia. The Residential Tenancies Act 1987 WA, which regulates the relationship between tenants and landlords in the rental sector, specifically excludes boarders and lodgers from its coverage. The only legal protection available to boarders and lodgers is that their oral or written agreements may be enforceable under common law. These remedies are hard to access, time consuming and expensive.

The Boarders and Lodgers Working Group met throughout 2010-2011 to identify issues facing boarders and lodgers and to discuss possible solutions to these issues. Key issues emerged from the Working Group including:

- There is a need for consumer protection legislation for boarders and lodgers. Among other things such legislation should address the lodgment of bonds, the need for written agreements, receipts for payment of rent, and the resolution of disputes through the Magistrates Court.
- The Working Group has looked at various legal protections in other states and found that Occupancy Agreements, similar to those found in legislation in the ACT and being proposed by the Tenants' Union in NSW's Policy Paper (March 2011), would be appropriate for consideration in WA.
- Although the Working Group would like such Occupancy Agreements to be included in the RTA, members of the Group do not want to delay the passage of the RTA Bill currently under review. Therefore, the Working Group proposes that a separate piece of legislation be introduced to address Occupancy Agreements. Tenants Advice Service, Shelter WA and other stakeholders have been working with Department of Commerce on the review of the RTA since 2002. At that time, there was a recommendation that the language in the RTA be removed that exempted boarders and lodgers from the RTA. DOC (DOCEP then) stated in 2002 that it would conduct further research and consultation to obtain the views of relevant stakeholders regarding the proposed inclusion of boarders and lodgers in the Act, and endeavour to ensure that the proposed provisions for (and definition of) boarders and lodgers adequately take into account any concerns raised.
- The organisations in the Working Group want to be included in the process of developing relevant legislation through extensive consultation in order to ensure that legislation (a) adequately protects boarders and lodgers, (b) does not adversely affect vulnerable groups or the agencies that provide them with services, and (c) recognises boarding houses as a type of affordable accommodation that is needed in the community and does not decrease the supply of boarding houses.
- Provisions should be made for community legal centres to be able to provide advice to boarders and lodgers, in the same way as they do for tenants under the RTA.

In June 2011, members of the Boarders and Lodgers Working Group sent a letter to the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce requesting a meeting to discuss their concerns.

Call for Submissions for Affordable Housing and Social Housing

The State's new Affordable Housing Strategy will tackle the shortage of affordable and social housing in WA by creating more affordable housing entry points and pathways for people on low to moderate incomes who might be at various stages of the housing continuum, be it, social rental, private rental, or home ownership.

This comprehensive approach to the provision of affordable housing provides an expanded role for the Department of Housing with its activities focussed on supplying sufficient housing opportunities for eligible persons and families at each stage of the housing continuum. This includes the development of affordable housing for sale to low to moderate income households.

The Department of Housing is seeking to procure new housing from the market to increase the supply of housing available for social housing rental, regional key workers housing and affordable housing for sale, and is calling for submissions from a range of industry stakeholders in this regard.

An electronic copy of the Call for Submissions' guidelines is available by emailing your full contact details (name, title, organisation, contact number) to AffordableHousingEOI@housing.wa.gov.au or calling 9440 2228.

Closing Date for submissions is **30 May 2012** (or earlier at the absolute discretion of the Department of Housing).

Respondents must follow the detailed instructions regarding Submissions which can be found in the Call for Submissions' Guidelines.







Submissions received after the closing date may not be considered.

Shelter WA May Forums *Renting in WA*

In May 2011 Shelter WA ran two forums (one each in the South and North metropolitan areas of Perth). The forums entitled *Renting in WA* were organised as a response to the large number of calls Shelter receives regarding private rental and the issues raised by various community organisations, individuals and services.

The aim of the forums was to garner feedback from individuals and the community regarding their experiences of renting in WA. The forums were attended by 21 people from a cross-section of the community and included families (many from CALD backgrounds), individuals, a local MP, and housing service providers.

The issues raised by the attendees included:

-  Lack of affordable properties for rent
-  High cost of private rental housing
-  Excessive rent increases
-  Unfair landlords
-  Long waiting lists for community and public housing
-  Discrimination in accessing housing

"because I have children and I'm black...[the agent assumes that] I can't take care of their house"

-  Evictions
-  Homelessness



Several participants indicated that they had high levels of stress and had gone without food and other essentials to keep a roof over their heads.




Shelter WA thanks all those who attended and shared their stories and experiences.

The feedback from these forums has informed various Shelter WA responses, including the RTA 2011 amendments.

Please have your say by participating in the Shelter WA *Renting in WA* Survey available [here](#)

National Shelter Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Housing Roundtable, Brisbane, QLD, 17-18 May 2011

The original round table in 2010 grew out of National Shelter's recognition of the need for a national conversation involving State/Territory Shelters and Indigenous housing organisations and workers. This roundtable arrived at a number of key points:

-  encourage development of a national peak
-  unmet need
-  transfer of responsibility of urban housing from Commonwealth to States was not going well and needed to be monitored and improved

The purpose of the meeting in May 2011 was to sharpen this message for dialogue with the Commonwealth, beginning with a meeting with senior FaHCSIA representatives on the second day of the meeting.

A full copy of the report *National Shelter: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Round Table Report, 17-18 May 2011* is available [here](#)

Shelter WA in *Housing Works and Parity*

Shelter WA has an article in the May 2011 issue of *Housing Works and Parity* on housing stress and homelessness. The article highlights the social impact of the high cost of housing. For more information, see the [Parity](#) website.

Australian Bureau of Statistics Discussion Paper: Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless

Shelter WA is working with Homelessness Australia and other key stakeholders to respond to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Discussion Paper *Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless*. Dr Shae Garwood, Shelter WA's Research Officer attended a consultation workshop in Sydney on May 24th, to present Shelter WA's concerns with changes in the enumeration methodology that may significantly reduce the numbers of secondary homeless (i.e. couch surfing) young people and overcrowded Aboriginal households identified as homeless in the Australian Census of Population and Housing being undertaken on August 9, 2011.

A copy of the ABS discussion paper is available [here](#) and the Homelessness Australia Sector Briefing Paper can be found [here](#)

Shelter WA Participation in Committees and Working Groups

Shelter WA is represented on several committees. A list of committees and the date of their next meeting is listed below.

1. Department of Housing, Housing Advisory Roundtable (HART) *8 August 2011*
2. WA Peaks Forum *16 August 2011*
3. Housing Crisis Committee Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (HCCCALD) *11 August 2011*
4. Centrelink Homelessness Reference Group *5 October 2011*
5. Centrelink Community Consultation *August 2011 date to be confirmed*

If there are any issues or concerns you would like Shelter WA to raise at these meetings please contact us at shelterwa@shelterwa.org.au or phone 9325 6660..

Shelter WA Affordable Housing Survey

If you would like to take part in Shelter WA's affordable housing survey, go to [Affordable Housing Survey](#)

Grants and Funding Opportunities

2011 Commissioner for a Day Challenge

Every year, the challenge provides a great opportunity for young people to tell the Commissioner for Children and Young People their views on an important issue.

This year the Commissioner will be asking **12 to 17 year-olds to have their say on alcohol and risky drinking.**

1 in 5 Australians aged 14+ drinks at risky levels at least once a month.

If you were the Commissioner for a Day, what you would do to keep kids and young people safe from the harm caused by alcohol?

To [enter](#) the Challenge you can write, draw, paint, take photos, sing or even make a short film.

The winner of the Challenge will be the Commissioner for a Day on 12 August 2011 – International Youth Day – and will take home an **iPad2!** The winner will also have the opportunity to discuss their ideas with decision makers. All the views expressed by young people in the Challenge are used to inform the Commissioner's advocacy work on behalf of children and young people.

More information about the Challenge is available [here](#) or at the website www.cyp.wa.gov.au

Entries close on **Friday 15 July.**

More time to nominate for National Disability Awards

[Click here for link to full media release](#)

Australians now have an extra month to nominate outstanding individuals and organisations that have contributed to the lives of people with disability for the 2011 National Disability Awards.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, Senator Jan McLucas, said nominations for the Awards would now **close on 29 July.**

"The Awards are part of the Australian Government's celebration of International Day of People with Disability, which occurs on 3 December each year to build awareness of the important role of people with disability in our community, and showcase their extraordinary achievements," Senator McLucas said.

"The Awards recognise organisations and individuals from all walks of life that provide opportunities for full inclusion, access and participation for people with disability."

Australian of the Year and Patron of this year's International Day of People with Disability and National Disability Awards, Simon McKeon will join finalists at a gala dinner in the Great Hall of Parliament House, Canberra on 22 November 2011 to announce the winners.

To nominate for the National Disability Awards, visit www.idpwd.com.au or call 1800 440 385.

2011 Rural Health Continuing Education Program (Stream 2) Now Open

The 2011 application round for the Rural Health Continuing Education Program (Stream 2) is now open and will close on 8 August 2011.

The 2011 RHCE2 program, funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Health and Ageing, supports qualified health professionals working in rural and remote Australia to undertake continuing professional development and inter-professional learning activities. For more information, please visit the RHCE2 website <http://rhce.ruralhealth.org.au/>

RHCE2 is being administered for the Department by the National Rural Health Alliance for three years (April 2010 - June 2013). Total funds available for RHCE2 project grants are approximately \$630,000 per annum, with the final round in 2012-13. Information on the allocation of grants in Round One (2010) is at <http://rhce.ruralhealth.org.au/grant-allocation>

Please read the guidelines carefully before applying online for a grant. Multiple applications will be accepted but given the strongly competitive nature of the RHCE2 grants, no single entity will be given more than one grant.

In 2011, priority will be given to funding gaps in existing arrangements for CPD and supporting initiatives that are demonstrated by evidence based research as needing urgent intervention.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact the RHCE2 Program Manager, Wendy Downs, on (02) 6162 3374 or 1800 987 440 or e-mail rhce@ruralhealth.org.au

DIY Male Health Toolboxes for Men's Sheds

The Australian Government is funding DIY Male Health Toolboxes to be sent to men's sheds around the country. The announcement by the Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, was made as he launched Men's Health Week with Australian Men's Shed Association Patron Tim Mathieson in Canberra. This year's National Men's Health Week ran from 13 - 19 June, with activities around the nation to raise the profile of men's health.

[Click here for link to full media release](#)

To improve male health, Mr Snowdon said the Australian Government is providing:

- \$10,000 grants to 20 Men's Sheds for purchasing tools, renovations and support
- \$2.2m to support the Australian Men's Sheds Association to employ staff and develop new opportunities to engage men and their communities
- \$6.9m for Australia's first national longitudinal study
- \$6.8m to support 13 organisations across Australia to promote the role of Indigenous fatherhood and encourage men to become more active in the lives of their children
- the nation's first ever *National Male Health Policy*, aimed at promoting the importance of Australian men looking after their health and wellbeing

"All the work the Australian Government is undertaking is to support men to change their behaviour, both in terms of increasing their willingness to access health care and reducing the risks they take with their health," Mr Snowdon said.

At the event a new program called 'Spanner in the Works' was launched. It will promote free health checks and guest speakers for Australian Men's Sheds, through the Australian Men's Shed Association. For more information on the Australia Men's Sheds Association (AMSA) visit www.menshed.org

The toolkits will be available from September 2011.

Call for nominations for 2011 ADE Excellence Awards

[Click here for link to full media release](#)

One of Australia's 202 Disability Enterprises has the chance to take out top honours in the 2011 Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE) Excellence Award.

The award aims to recognise outstanding disability enterprises for the work they do in providing meaningful work for people with disability who need substantial ongoing support to maintain their employment.

Senator McLucas said the ADE Excellence Award, now in its fourth year, encourages and promotes the significant contribution that these enterprises make in improving the lives of people with disability.

This year the ADE Excellence Award will acknowledge organisations providing best practice and innovative training opportunities, achieving strong wage outcomes, providing safe working conditions, social inclusion and participation for their employees and quality of service to people with disability.

The 2011 award has been streamlined to recognise one winner and two runners up.

Nominations for this year's ADE Excellence Award close on 31 July. To nominate, visit www.fahcsia.gov.au.

The winners will be announced on 5 September.

New \$75million Royalties for Regions scheme open for applications

A record \$75million has been made available to regional communities through a special State Government's Royalties for Regions program funding round announced recently.

[Click here for link to full media release](#)

Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls said the funding was being made available through the Regional Development Council for local, regional and State-wide strategic projects.

"This funding round will allow any organisation, including not-for-profit, to apply directly for grants for projects to address community and infrastructure plans," Mr Grylls said.

"The first round of the new scheme has opened and regional communities are encouraged to work together to develop funding proposals."

"This funding round will focus on creating long-term sustainable change at a regional and/or State-wide level, addressing projects with a total value in excess of \$500,000."

The Minister said eligible proposals could focus on education, health, culture and the arts, improving service delivery or improving infrastructure, to name a few.

"Anyone wishing to apply for this funding must first complete the enquiry form on the RDL website at <http://www.rdl.wa.gov.au> to ensure they are eligible," he said.

The scheme is designed to encourage more State-wide strategic projects that will underpin development for the future of regional Western Australia.

Applications must be received in the RDL office or be in the RDL post box by 5pm on Friday, July 22.

For application forms and more information please visit <http://www.rdl.wa.gov.au> or <http://www.RoyaltiesforRegions.wa.gov.au>

\$150,000 in grants available to connect communities

Optus is calling on local community and not-for-profit organisations across Australia to apply for its 2011 grants program.

The annual Optus Connecting Communities Program provides \$150,000 worth of funding to support community projects that assist disengaged youth and build social inclusion. Each successful applicant will be awarded up to \$5,000 to boost their initiative.

Jann Kohlman, Group Manager of Optus Sponsorship and Community Programs said "Grants will be awarded to organisations that can deliver positive social outcomes aligned with our community investment focus areas. These include promoting social inclusion and building a better future for 3 disengaged youth through new opportunities, skills and confidence, access to education and removal of barriers to empowerment.

"We hope that the funding, together with the benefits of communications technology, can deliver positive social outcomes to the community and help improve lives," Kohlman said. Last year Optus awarded 31 grants.

For more information [Click Here](#) or visit <https://communitygrants.optus.com.au/>

Discussion Papers, Submissions, Issues Papers and Surveys

Women & Housing Affordability Survey

Swinburne is currently seeking the views of single women, aged 40 and over (with or without children) who do not expect to own their home outright before they retire.

The survey is being conducted by the Institute for Social Research at Swinburne University of Technology in conjunction with the Salvation Army. More information is available [here](#)

Data obtained from the survey will assist in developing a housing model to fit the needs of women in these circumstances. The survey is anonymous, all data is treated confidentially and it takes about 20-35 minutes to complete.

Survey respondents can enter for one of 20 \$50 gift vouchers. Details are collected separately. Prizes drawn 2nd Sept 2011 and winners are notified by correspondence. **The survey closes 10pm Sunday 14th August 2011.** [Click here to take the survey](#)

Swinburne Social Researchers encourage interested women to go to their Facebook page and leave comments <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Women-and-Housing-Affordability-Survey/217710001588704>

Consultation Paper – Better Targeting of Not-For-Profit Tax Concession

The Assistant Treasurer has released for public consultation a paper that seeks public views on possible approaches to implement the Government's Budget announcement to better target NFP tax concessions to the altruistic activities of NFPs.

The Government announced in the 2011-12 Budget that it will reform the tax concessions provided to NFP entities to ensure they are targeted only at those activities that directly further an NFP's altruistic purposes.

Interested parties are invited to comment on the consultation paper. While submissions may be lodged electronically or by post, electronic lodgement is preferred. For accessibility reasons, please submit responses sent via email in a Word or RTF format. An additional PDF version may also be submitted.

All information (including name and address details) contained in submissions will be made available to the public on the Treasury website unless you indicate that you would like all or part of your submission to remain in confidence. Automatically generated confidentiality statements in emails do not suffice for this purpose. Respondents who would like part of their submission to remain in confidence should provide this information marked as such in a separate attachment. Legal requirements, such as those imposed by the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, may affect the confidentiality of your submission.

Closing date for submissions: **Friday, 8 July 2011**

Address written submissions to:

Manager, Philanthropy and Exemptions Unit, Personal and Retirement Income Division

The Treasury, Langton Crescent, PARKES ACT 2600 or Email: NFPReform@treasury.gov.au

For enquiries, please call Chris Leggett on (02) 6263 3357 or Tamara Hartwich on (02) 6263 2514 or visit <http://www.treasury.gov.au/contentitem.asp?NavId=037&ContentID=2056>

State Government releases 20-year vision for city centre – open for public comment

[Click here for full media release](#)

Plans to transform Perth into a more liveable and vibrant international city have been outlined in the release of the draft Capital City Planning Framework. Planning Minister John Day said integration of Perth's city centre and surrounding inner urban areas was important to enable the State capital to thrive and capitalise on its natural strengths.

"In the past, the city has primarily been seen as a business-focused centre, but we need to move on from that way of thinking and embrace the idea that our city should be enjoyed for a wide range of purposes - including various forms of living, working and recreation."

"These key areas are the primary venues of State and culture, for use by both residents and visitors, and the careful design of these precincts and their integration with other elements of the city is critical to the design of Perth in the next two decades," Mr Day said.

The Capital City Planning Framework is consistent with State Government's vision for the entire metropolitan area and Peel regions, as outlined in 'Directions 2031 and Beyond' and the associated draft Central Metropolitan Perth Sub-regional Strategies.

The Minister urged anyone with an interest in the future of the city to submit their comments on the draft framework, which is available on the Department of Planning's website - <http://www.planning.wa.gov.au>

The public comment period will close on Monday, September 19.

A Call for Contributions for the July 2011 edition of Parity

The July 2011 edition of *Parity*, the national publication of the Council to Homeless Persons (www.chp.org.au/parity), will focus on the role and work of Centrelink in both responding to homelessness and preventing homelessness particularly through initiatives like the Homelessness Indicator, for those who may be at risk of homelessness. The role of income security through Centrelink payments and other key programs like the Centrelink Community Engagement Officers (CCEOs) and the HOME Advice Program will be outlined and discussed as well as other Centrelink initiatives and programs that impact upon the response to homelessness.

As well as providing a comprehensive outline of Centrelink programs and initiatives, this edition of *Parity* will seek articles from homelessness services, community agencies and clients on their experience with Centrelink and their views of Centrelink programs relevant to homelessness.

The principles and policies upon which these programs are based are also open for analysis and discussion.

All contributions are welcome and need to be submitted by **Friday, 15th July, 2011**.

Contributions are usually between 900 words, (single page) and 1800 words (double page). If additional space is required please contact the *Parity* Editor.

Please send submissions as a MS Word attachment to parity@chp.org.au or ring (03) 9419 8699 to discuss. Images and artwork are welcome.

Research, Resources, Reports and Publications

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)

www.aihw.gov.au

Housing assistance in Australia 2011

Housing assistance in Australia 2011 is a compendium style publication which provides readers with information about housing assistance in each segment of the housing sector: government, not-for-profit and the private sector. Key issues including allocation and waiting lists for social housing, overcrowding, and affordability are examined as well as changes over recent years. Housing assistance provided to special needs groups such as Indigenous Australians, the young and old, and to those with a disability are also examined. AIHW catalogue number (HOU236). Click on the link to view the [media release](#) and [report](#).

People turned away from government-funded specialist homelessness accommodation 2009-10

This report presents data on the people turned away from government-funded specialist homelessness accommodation in 2009-10. The data indicate that government-funded specialist homelessness agencies are operating to capacity and are unable to completely meet the demand for their accommodation. Some groups, such as families, experience more difficulty than others in obtaining accommodation. When new requests for accommodation are considered on any given day, 58% of all people who sought immediate accommodation were turned away. New requests, however, comprise only 4% of the total demand for accommodation. When new requests plus all people currently in accommodation are considered, 2% of all people who sought immediate accommodation were newly accommodated on any given day and 2% were turned away. The rate of turn-away was similar to that reported in recent years.

AIHW catalogue number (HOU248). Available from the internet only. Click on the link to view the [media release](#) and [report](#).

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI)

www.ahuri.edu.au

[Final Report: No. 169: Investigative Panel on a socially sustainable housing system for Australia](#)

[Final Report: No. 168: Australia's private rental market: the supply of, and demand for, affordable dwellings](#)

[Final Report: No.167: Remote Indigenous housing procurement: a comparative study](#)

[Final Report: No.162: Improving housing responses to Indigenous patterns of temporary mobility](#)

[Positioning Paper: No. 140: Homelessness prevention for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence: innovations in policy and practice](#)

[Positioning Paper: No. 139: The residual income approach to housing affordability: the theory and the practice](#)

[Research and Policy Bulletin: Issue 141: Stakeholder perspectives on the regulation of affordable housing providers](#)

[Research and Policy Bulletin: Issue 140: Sustainability decisions in Australian households](#)

[Research and Policy Bulletin: Issue 139: Asset poverty and older Australians' transitions into housing assistance programs](#)

Australian Policy Online

For the latest reports and publications please visit www.apo.org.au

Conferences, Events and Workshops 2011

NAIDOC [Week](#) (National) 3-10 July

Australian Social Policy [Conference](#) *Social Policy in a Complex World* (Sydney) 6-8 July

Primary Health Care Research [Conference](#) (Brisbane) 13-15 July

The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey 10th Anniversary Research [Conference](#) (Melbourne) 14-15 July

WA Family Therapy Association [Symposium: Family Therapy in the Tapestry of Clinical Practice](#) (Bentley, Perth) 29 July

National Homeless Persons' [Week](#), *My Address: diversity in homelessness* 1-7 August

WA Rural and Remote Mental Health [Conference](#) (Newman, WA) 9-11 August.

[Garma Festival](#) (Gulkula, NT) 5-8 August. Info is also available at www.yyf.com.au. Deadline for bookings 22 July.

Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) [Conference](#) (Brisbane) 21-23 August

National Men's Health [Gathering](#) (Perth) 19-22 September

AHURI 7th National Housing [Conference](#) (Brisbane) 20-23 September

Public Health Association Australia (PHAA) 41st Annual [Conference](#) (Brisbane) 26-28 September

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting [CHOGM](#) (Perth) 28-30 October

[World Homeless Day](#) (International) 10 October

The Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs (APSAD) [Conference](#) (Hobart) 13-16 November.

Social Inclusion Week (National) 19-27 November [Website](#)

Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (AIHW) *Australia's Welfare 2011* [Conference](#) (Canberra) 24 November



Homeless Persons Week
1st - 7th August 2011

Website: <http://homelesspersonsweekwa.com.au/>

Homeless Person's Week is a national event that aims to raise awareness of homelessness across Australia.

Homeless Person's Week is hosted in WA by the Community Housing Coalition WA (CHCWA).

The theme for Homeless Persons' Week 2011 is **"Diversity in Homelessness"**

This campaign aims to show the diversity of places where people go when unable to find a safe, secure and affordable home and the diversity of people who are now seeking a stable address.

Homeless Person's Week 2011 aims to:

- Raise awareness of homelessness across the community
- Celebrate and acknowledge current services being offered to homeless people
- Foster collaboration of services working with homeless people
- Attract more volunteers and financial support into the sector

Homeless Persons Week 2011 will feature a program of activities, forums and events to engage homeless people, service providers and the community.

CHCWA will promote your project in their program and also assist with trying to secure publicity if desired by you.

Please contact Marija Jelavic on 9328 8996 or 0419 993789

E: marijajelavic@optusnet.com.au if you have any queries or would like to discuss any ideas.

Help to Host Seniors Week Events in 2011

COTA WA, in partnership with the Department for Communities and Lotterywest, will be assisting community groups and local government organisations hold events during Bendigo Bank WA Seniors Week 2011.

Funded events should recognise and thank seniors for their contribution to the community, challenge the negative stereotypes around ageing, and promote the life course approach to ageing. Grants of up to \$1000 are available through the Seniors Week Community Grants Program, as a contribution towards meeting the costs associated with hosting events in Western Australia between Sunday 6 November and Sunday 13 November. Applications are strongly encouraged for events which target seniors who are at risk of becoming socially isolated or are members of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities. **Applications open 23 May - 22 July 2011.**

Application Forms on COTA WA's web- www.cotawa.asn.au/seniorsweek, ph: 9321 2133 or email admin@cotawa.asn.au.

Media Contact: Christie Lohr, Project & Program Development Officer Ph: (08) 9321 2133 email: Christie@cotawa.asn.au

Media Releases

Building industry revolution for Western Australia

A package of new legislation passed by State Parliament is set to modernise the building industry, streamline building approvals, introduce private certification and strengthen protection for consumers who are building new homes. Building owners will be able to use registered practitioners in private practice as well as in local government to certify compliance with building standards and undertake mandatory inspections.

The new laws will see the Department of Commerce's Building Commission become the principal regulator of building standards and building service providers in Western Australia. Its primary focus will be to promote fair and efficient building and plumbing practice in WA.

The new legislation will see the abolition of Builders' Registration Board, the Painters' Registration Board and the Building Disputes Tribunal. A building commissioner assisted by a building services board, will register building service providers.

"The building commissioner will deal directly with consumer complaints by focusing on resolving them rapidly, before becoming entrenched through the courts. This will provide better protection for consumers who find themselves in dispute with their builder. Intractable disputes will be referred to the State Administrative Tribunal."

Consumers and industry can obtain information and advice from the Building Commission on 1300 489 099, email info@buildingcommission.wa.gov.au or visit <http://www.buildingcommission.wa.gov.au/>

[Click here for link to full media statement](#)

[Click here for link to full media release](#)

The Australian Government's record investment in services and support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness is making a significant impact, reaching more people in need. Minister for Social Housing and Homelessness Mark Arbib said a new Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report showed that Australian Government-funded specialist homelessness services were providing more support to homeless people than in previous years. As noted in the White Paper, the use of homelessness services is rising because more support services are being funded and governments and the sector are working to increase the outreach to people who are homeless.

Helping homeless remove barriers to employment

[Click here for link to full media release](#)

Minister for Employment Participation and Child Care Kate Ellis today announced \$500,000 for the Big Issue Community Street Soccer Program, which will assist up to 600 disadvantaged job seekers to gain the skills and confidence they need to find work.

“The Street Soccer program has a proven track record of helping disadvantaged Australians to engage with mainstream society and give them the support and confidence they need to get a decent job.”

“This program will assist some of our most disadvantaged job seekers in 25 communities across Australia, by providing assistance for them to overcome the barriers they face to employment, including homelessness.”

“This funding will assist a total of 600 participants with multiple disadvantages into 120 jobs, 600 mentoring opportunities, 60 work experience placements and 60 training places.”

The street soccer program gives job seekers access to a range of activities, including attending a weekly training session where a dedicated soccer coach encourages players to improve their fitness, while linking the job seeker to the appropriate support services.

Minister for Social Inclusion, Tanya Plibersek said that the Street Soccer program aims to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. “Street Soccer has a strong track record of reaching out to homeless people and connecting them with one another, and connecting them with services that can help them with their homelessness,” said Ms Plibersek.

Minister for Social Housing and Homelessness and Minister for Sport, Mark Arbib said that the Government was eager to harness the benefits of sport to achieve positive change in other aspects of community life.

“A study by La Trobe University found the Community Street Soccer Program produced real outcomes for participants including reduced symptoms in those experiencing mental illness, reductions in smoking, drug and alcohol abuse and improved housing,” Senator Arbib said.

The key findings included:

- 67 per cent of participants reported that Street Soccer provided relief for their mental illness symptoms;
- 56 per cent reported increased self-esteem ;
- 20 per cent reported quitting smoking and 80 per cent had reduced their smoking;
- 25 per cent reported improved health awareness including better diet and fitness; and
- 15 per cent reported having improved housing situations.

“Sport can make a real difference to the lives of people who are homeless and disadvantaged, helping them reconnect with the community,” Senator Arbib said.

“I am delighted the Government is able to provide more funding for this fantastic program, which helps so many people experiencing homelessness in our community.

“A key part of addressing homelessness is providing for employment and education options and I commend the Big Issue for the important support they provide.”

The funding was part of the third round of the \$41 million Innovation Fund program, which aims to address the needs of the most disadvantaged job seekers through projects that foster innovative solutions to employment barriers.

For more information on the Innovation Fund, visit: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/JSA/Pages/InnovationFund.aspx>

Media Contact: media@deewr.gov.au Non-media queries: 1300 363 079

For a full list of recent Media Releases, please click on the links below:

WA Government (Liberal Party): <http://wa.gov.au/>

Greens Party: <http://greens.org.au/>

Australian Labor Party: <http://www.alp.org.au/>

Australian Federal Government: <http://australia.gov.au/>

Useful links

Homelessness Australia [Newsletter](#)

[Homeless Information Clearing House](#)

[Community Housing Federation Australia](#)

[Community Housing Coalition WA \(CHCWA\)](#)

[Tenants Advice Service WA](#)

[WACOSS](#)

[Housing Industry Association Ltd](#)

[Australasian Housing Institute](#)

[Real Estate Institute of Australia \(REIA\)](#)

[Real Estate Institute of WA \(REIWA\)](#)

Shelter WA 2011 Newsletter & Update Publications

Shelter WA publishes a quarterly newsletter and monthly updates and welcomes your input. We accept articles, reports, new housing related and support services, and are happy to promote events, training etc.

The deadline for contributions for Shelter WA's July Update is 25 July 2011

If you have any questions or require further information contact Stephanie on 9325 6660 or email cdpo@shelterwa.org.au .

For copies of Shelter WA's previous publications click on the following links to access [Updates](#) and [Newsletters](#)

About Shelter WA

Shelter WA is an independent community based peak organisation that is committed to the principle of safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing for all people. Shelter WA has operated in Western Australia since 1979 and advocates on behalf of community groups and housing consumers. Shelter WA focuses on people who have low incomes or who are otherwise disadvantaged in the housing market. This includes people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Shelter's role is to give an informed voice on housing policy issues based on sound research, collaboration, consultation, representation and research with housing consumers and community based organisations working with housing and related issues. We do this by: holding regular forums and consultations, conducting questionnaires and surveys in response to housing policy and practice issues; actively participating in government and community sector committees; by responding to queries and requests from the public; and, by informing and educating through the electronic circulation of regular newsletters, reports and fact sheets which are also made available on our website. We promote housing options for people on low incomes, including social housing (public housing and community housing), affordable housing provided through the private sector, and affordable home ownership.

Shelter WA is committed to the presence and extension of choice in the articulation of Government housing policy and therefore to the availability of a range of housing options for low income and special needs housing consumers.

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