

You are invited ...

You are invited to attend **Shelter WA's Annual General Meeting (AGM)** on **Wednesday 28 October** from 3.00 - 5.30pm. This year the AGM will be held in the multipurpose room at the Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Service (AADS), 211 Royal Street (entry off Clotilde Street), East Perth. The Shelter WA AGM will be held in conjunction and immediately following the AGM for the WA Tenants Advice Service, with refreshments provided.

We are delighted to have as our guest speaker Shane Edmonds, President of the Australasian Housing Institute and Department of Housing Senior Officer. Shane will be speaking about his June 2009 attendance at the UK Chartered Institute of Housing Annual Conference in Harrogate, the largest housing conference in the world. Shane will also explore international models of consumer participation including the challenge of tenants as board of management members (of registered social landlords, as required under legislation for tenant inclusion in the UK), the Australian context including the Tenant Support Network in NSW and the West Australian environment.

The Management Committee is currently looking at amendments to the Shelter WA Constitution to better reflect practice and broaden our membership base. Amendments will be presented to the AGM for ratification.

To nominate for the Management Committee and to vote you must be a financial member so please do renew your membership before the meeting. Please **RSVP by Monday 26 October**: phone 9325 6660 or email corinne@shelterwa.org.au

Forum success

The joint Shelter WA and Tenants Advice Service Forum "Government Initiatives in Affordable Housing" was a great success. Feedback from the capacity audience was overwhelmingly positive with overall ratings of "good" and "excellent" and topics rated as "interesting, relevant and informative". Thanks to our very capable speakers we were able to bring you the latest information on initiatives in the affordable housing sector and have secured their PowerPoint presentations as a valuable reference resource. The presentations are available on our website at <http://www.shelterwa.org.au/forums.html> for those who would like more information from: the Department of Housing on the National Affordable Housing Agreement; the Department for Child Protection (DCP) on the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness; the Department of Housing on the National Rental Affordability Scheme; Landcorp on Affordable Communities.



Attentive audience members at the Shelter WA / Tenants Advice Service Forum "Government Initiatives in Affordable Housing"



From L to R: Glen Kar, Housing; Julie Waylen, DCP; Karyn Ash, Housing; Colin McClughan and Daniel Guise, CHCWA; Garry Fisher, Landcorp; Irina Catalini, WACOSS

A DVD of the forum will be available shortly. To reserve your copy please contact corinne@shelterwa.org.au or phone 9325 6660. Our latest information sheet, "Housing Acronyms", was handed out to attendees and is available as an information resource on our website for those wanting to keep up with the latest terminology: http://www.shelterwa.org.au/documents/Acronym_Sheet_October09.pdf

Conferences

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare are holding a one day conference in Queanbeyan on **16 November 2009** on 'Australia's Welfare 2009. Whose needs? How well met?' The conference brings together the nation's thinkers and the latest statistics in the areas of housing, homelessness, children's services, disability, ageing, informal care and families. Keynote speakers include Professor Mick Dodson AM, Australian of the Year and the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. For further information see www.aihw.gov.au/eventsdiary/index.cfm

[Cuts to social housing funding - act now!](#)

As we reported in our September Newsletter, the Commonwealth Government announced a Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan on February 2 that included the allocation of \$6.4 billion for the construction of 20,000 new social housing dwellings and the repair and maintenance of 2,500 public housing dwellings. Six months later \$750 million of these funds are to be redirected to the school infrastructure program. These cuts translate to 800 fewer homes across the nation, \$58.38 million less for Western Australia and a reduction in not only the construction of new social housing dwellings but also the maintenance of existing housing stock. Increasing the supply of affordable housing is crucial to addressing the chronic shortage of affordable housing and subsequently reducing homelessness and the myriad social problems it engenders.

The Housing Summit Group, comprising National Shelter, the Australian Council of Social Service, the Community Housing Federation of Australia and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), are leading the protest against funding cuts. In a recent media release they called on Government to continue its investment in urgently needed affordable housing infrastructure. With Australia currently experiencing a shortage of 251,000 affordable dwellings and more than a million low income Australians in housing stress, the Group said the Government should honour its commitment to affordable housing. Jeff Lawrence, Secretary of the ACTU, commented "Public investment today in affordable housing is needed and fair. It also boosts national productivity growth tomorrow and constrains price growth in the broader housing market over time. This component of the stimulus package should not be cut back."

Shelter WA strongly opposes these cuts and encourages you to add your voice to the growing dissent by writing to the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and your local Federal Member of Parliament, calling for these cuts to be restored. A draft letter has been developed by Shelter NSW for you to use or adapt to suit yourself and is available at: <http://www.sheltersnsw.org.au/docs/ltr09socialhousingcuts-formletter.rtf> Address and email details for the Prime Minister and Treasurer are as follows: The Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, Prime Minister, Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600 or email http://pm.gov.au/PM_Connect/contact_your_pm_form; The Hon. Wayne Swan MP, Treasurer, PO Box 6022, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600 or email ministerial@treasury.gov.au Contact details for Federal MPs are available on the Commonwealth Parliament website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/members/mi-state.asp> To find your federal electorate, search the Australian Electoral Commission website: <http://apps.aec.gov.au/esearch/>

[Mental health cuts - why?](#)

West Australians with a mental illness are at risk of losing vital front line services as the Barnett Government cuts 13 percent from its mental health budget. The cut will impact directly on services at Fremantle, Rockingham and Royal Perth Hospitals, the Armadale Bentley Group and the South Metropolitan Mental Health Services. Mental health is the fastest growing health concern in the country and has been identified as one of the direct causal links to lost productivity, social exclusion and too often, homelessness. The Federal Government has acknowledged this need by allocating funding and initiating support for the sector with the release this year of the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Homelessness. Its Implementation Plan has been widely promoted across the State over the last couple of months. Its strategies, to deliver comprehensive preventative programs which link both Government and Community services and provide 'no exit to homelessness' for the consumer, are due to be in place from January 2010. At the same time, the State Government is consulting widely to develop its State Mental Health Policy and Strategic Plan 2010-2020 for WA. How the evident contradictions of the proposed cuts to mental health services are weighed against the Homelessness NPA's visionary strategies and incorporated into this Plan, whilst ensuring a viable and generative mental health service into the future, remains to be seen.

[Social Housing Taskforce Report](#)

The final report from the Social Housing Taskforce, "More Than a Roof and Four Walls", was released by the Minister for Housing, Hon Troy Buswell MLA, on 6 October 2009. Accompanying the Taskforce Report is "Housing 2020: Future Directions for Affordable Housing", which proposes strategies to improve the affordable housing system over the next decade. The Government has called for submissions to hear feedback on the report and to inform the proposed future directions statement. The closing date for the receipt of submissions is **4 December 2009**. For a copy of both reports and further details on the consultation process visit: http://www.housing.wa.gov.au/585_2146.asp

Shelter WA, in conjunction with the Tenants Advice Service and the Aboriginal Legal Service will be preparing a submission to the Social Housing Taskforce and will be giving particular consideration to planning proposals and tenant supports. To inform our submission and give you the opportunity to hear about the report and have your say we will be conducting a consultation **Forum** on **Wednesday 11 November 2009**. Invitations will be going out to Update Members soon.

[Support Pink Ribbon Day](#)

This year, Cancer Council's **Pink Ribbon day** is on **Monday, October 26th**. Pink Ribbon Day is your chance to help raise money and awareness for all Australian women affected by breast cancer. Show your support for breast cancer by buying pink, holding a pink fundraiser or making a donation. See <http://www.pinkribbonday.com.au/home.htm> or call 1300 65 65 85 to order pink products.

[Reminders](#)

The Victorian Department of Human Services and the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) invite you to attend the **6th National Housing Conference** in Melbourne from the **24-27 November**. This year's theme is 'Housing in a new era: building the connections'. For further information email: HCinfo@icmsaust.com.au or see www.nationalhousingconference.org.au/melbourne2009

The **4th State of Australian Cities (SOAC) Conference** will be held in Perth from the **24-27 November** at the University of Western Australia. This year's theme is 'City growth, sustainability, vitality and vulnerability'. For further information see: www.promaco.com.au/2009/soac/index.htm