



Western Australian
Peak body for low income
housing consumers
www.shelterwa.org.au

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Centrelink Managers Meeting
Leadership Forum
Perth WA
Presentation 11 September 2008

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About Shelter WA

- Since 1979 consumer focused NGO peak body
- Funded by State Housing Authority (DHW) via Commonwealth (CSHA)
- **No** direct service provision or housing
- Represents, advocates and monitors access to market, circumstances, housing policy and environment for low-income and people at risk of social exclusion – including homeless people
- Independent, objective, research, consultation & information dissemination
- Committees, partnerships NGO and Govt

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Social Housing in Australia

- Social housing **intended to deliver a 'social outcome'** (i.e. help disadvantaged) includes SAAP crisis and emergency, Homeswest, community housing, indigenous housing, disability group homes, psychiatric supported, residential aged care
- Over the past 20yrs Australian public and social housing targeted to **households in greatest need**
- **More complex, multiple and high need PH tenant households with increased need for home modifications and provision of support to sustain – fewer alternative tenure options, less turnover**
- **Lower return from rent and reduced govt funding – shrinking stock**

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The Funding System

- Australian Governments provide funding for;
- Public, Community, Aboriginal and Crisis accommodation via 5yrly Commonwealth State Housing Agreements (CSHA) and
- Homelessness via 5yrly Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).
- CSHA in 06/07 \$1.3B – 333,557 households
- SAAP in 06/07 \$349M -161,000 people
- WA approximately 10% (proportional)

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Policy Responses

- Australian governments' moving toward **National Affordable Housing Agreement** will combine CSHA & SAAP – concern PH subsidises service responsibilities of other govt agencies (OMH, DSC, DCP, DAO, Corrections)
- Recent developments
 - Senate Select Committee Affordable Home Ownership – recommends 6% PH safety net +++
 - Land Audit and review of State and Local Gov taxes
 - NRAS Scheme (capped rents + provider subsidies)
 - COAG Reform Agenda

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WA Housing and Demographics

- WA increasing number of single person households (almost 1/3), ageing, marriage breakdown, low income, mobile, temporary workers, long term stable proportions of people with MH (8-12%), young disabled and unemployed people, growing younger Indigenous popln
- WA housing stock favours 3 & 4 bdrm separate dwellings more than other States (app 80%), now unattainable for median and many double income households
- Low proportion of smaller (more affordable) 1-2 bedroom dwellings – fewer units and apartments
- 'R' Codes and LGovt zoning regulations not integrated with demographic needs or other Regional Plans

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Definitions of Homelessness

First formulated by Chris Chamberlain and David Mackenzie [1993] adopted by the ABS. Distinguishes between primary, secondary and tertiary homelessness:

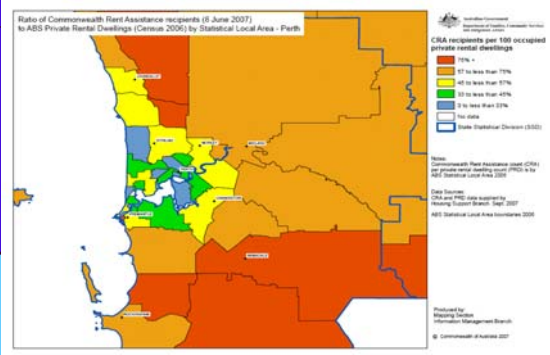
1. **Primary** - people without conventional accommodation sleeping rough, squatting in derelict, vacant and abandoned buildings or using cars for temporary shelter;
2. **Secondary** - people staying in emergency or temporary accommodation, including SAAP. Also people staying with others because they have no accommodation of their own (couch surfing, families overcrowding);
3. **Tertiary** - in boarding houses for 13 weeks or longer and without security of tenure in caravan parks.

The minimum community standard is a dwelling with a separate bedroom per adult/couple or child of each gender over 12yo, a serviceable kitchen, working bathroom and toilet and an element of tenure security. The minimum is significantly below the culturally desired option of an owner occupied house

Rental Stress & Homelessness in WA

- 2006 data identified 104,676 homeless in Australia **13,391 in WA** (excluding 1,994 caravan park renters) or a rate of 68 per 10,000 (↑ from 64 per 10K in 2001)
- In 2001: 46 per 10K metro, 166 per 10K Rural & Remote
- **WA State** data from 2006 Census not yet available (Counting the Homeless State Supplementary Reports expected early 2009)
- **22,714** WA people in June 08 received the max CRA and paid +30% income on rent
- **5,262** WA people June 08 received max CRA and were paying +50% income on rent
- Estimated **loss** of 100,000 PH Australian dwellings over past 10 years
- WA lowest proportion in Aust, need to double current new construction / purchase to reach 6% PH in 2020

Geography of Need



Who is homeless in WA

In 2001, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented about 3% of the WA's population, yet the overall WA Indigenous homeless rate was 170 per 10,000 Indigenous people, compared to a homeless rate of 60 per 10,000 of the non-Indigenous population. Indigenous people were greatly over-represented in the WA homeless population in 2001 and this is expected to be repeated for 2006 State data.

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Barriers for homeless people

- Language barriers – indigenous and CaLD / NESB
- Low Literacy and Numeracy skills
- Mental Health (diagnosed & treated or not)
- Stress, PTSD, anxiety, fear, suspicion, helplessness
- General health problems (premature ageing, poor diet / nutrition, disabilities, poor concentration, sleep deprived)
- Transport issues (reliant on Public Transport or walking)
- Lack of communication resources (ph no, address, mail)
- Lack of domestic, budgeting and financial skills
- Paucity of financial and personal resources including place to keep belongings and documents safe, cook, attend personal care, laundry, rest, manage appointments
- Few positive role models or encouraging experiences ¹¹

WA and Qld comparison

6.6 HOMELESS PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE POPULATION

	Qld (N=26,782)	WA (N=13,391)
	%	%
Boarding house	20	12
SAAP	12	11
Friends/relatives	49	59
Imp. dwellings	19	18
	100	100

Source: Census of Population and Housing 2006, SAAP Client Collection 2006 and National Census of Homeless School Students 2006.

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WA and Other State comparisons

TABLE 6 RATE OF HOMELESSNESS PER 10,000 OF THE POPULATION

	NSW	Vic.	QLD	WA	SA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
2006	42	42	69	68	53	53	248	42	53
2001	42	44	70	64	52	52	288	40	53

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 2001 and 2006; SAAP Client Collection, 2001 and 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students, 2001 and 2006.

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% Sleeping Rough & SAAP

6.9 PERCENTAGE OF HOMELESS POPULATION IN IMPROVISED DWELLINGS, TENTS AND SLEEPERS OUT

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	Tas.	NT	ACT
% in improvised dwellings, tents, sleepers out	13	11	19	18	11	15	33	6

Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

6.10 PERCENTAGE OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION IN SAAP ACCOMMODATION

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	WA	SA	Tas.	NT	ACT
% in SAAP	19	31	12	11	26	25	9	39

Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing and SAAP Client Collection.

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Perth Metro Homelessness 2001

Table 6: Number of homeless people and number of marginal residents of caravan parks, Perth statistical subdivisions

	Central	East	North	South West	South East	Total
Number of homeless	1,262	832	1,082	1,349	1,112	5,637
Rate per 10,000	109	36	27	48	36	42
Caravan park residents	0	72	157	131	142	502
Total	1,262	904	1,239	1,480	1,254	6,139
Rate per 10,000	109	39	31	53	41	46

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Strategies, Taskforces, Reviews

- Numerous reviews and strategies over 20yrs
- Burdekin Report (1989)
- Aboriginal Health Strategy (2000)
- State Homelessness Strategy (2002)
- State Housing Strategy (2003)
- State Mental Health Strategy (2003-07)

NONE achieved significant reductions in homelessness or housing stress

NONE increased social housing stock or community services

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SAAP gaps

- Recognition that SAAP operating to capacity and not able to address unmet needs of at risk & homeless
- High turnaway incidence – 05/06 in WA 64.2% of all new accommodation referrals unable to be met
- Other service and care systems not responding
- Low exit rates (SAAP, remand extended stays)
- Bottlenecked system, 'catch 22' for many
- DHW unable to meet supply needs for crisis emergency & other exit points 'wait-turn' applicants wait and wait and
- Current wait list for PH rental 5-7 years (17,000)
- DHW allocating 100% to 'priority' – more rigorous targeting, more evidence, more need for letters/support¹⁷

THE HOUSING CRISIS

Factors contributing to housing shortage for low income consumers in WA

- **mismatch** in household and dwelling types
- TAX and **other levers favour existing home owners and investment at top end** (negative gearing, tax offsets, home exemption from Capital Gains Tax and assets tests), high 'under-occupancy' in homeowners
- **public housing volume contraction**
- population increase and demographic changes not matched by increase or diversity in house construction
- rapid increase in house prices fuelled by demand side subsidies (First Home Owners Grant)
- WA lack of supply – land released, titled and serviced but undeveloped (avg 22,000 lots released pa - 17,000 new homes built, 5,000 lots undeveloped)
- supply shortage contributing to rent cost escalation¹⁸

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Creating Room in the Boom

- Campaign WACOSS, CHCWA, TAS, SWA
- 4 objectives
 - Increase social housing provision (DHW to build 2,076 pa to 2020)
 - Address rental stress
 - Tenant protections
 - Funding for homeless services and staff
- Proposed in election lead up, and in pre-budget considerations
- All CRiB documents and background on TAS website: www.taswa.org

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References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census 2006
- Chamberlain and MacKenzie Counting the Homeless 2001 (2003) and 2006 (2008),
 - WA State Report 2004
- AIHW SAAP NDCA Reports
- DHW Annual Report 2006/07
- AHURI reports
- Report on Government Services
Housing Assistance (Chapter 16)

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Questions

Membership of Shelter WA
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