



providing a voice for housing
consumers

1st Floor,
Claisebrook Lotteries House,
33 Moore St., EAST PERTH 6004
Ph: (08) 9325 6660
Fax: (08) 9325 8113
Email: shelterwa@shelterwa.org.au

accessible, affordable, secure and appropriate housing for everybody

March 20, 2008

To:

Ms Yvonne Henderson
Commissioner
Equal Opportunity Commission
PO Box 7370 Cloisters Square
PERTH WA 6850

Dear Ms Henderson:

RE: Consultation - Terms of Reference Opportunity to Comment

1. Whether persons from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CaLD) and Aboriginal people are discriminated against on the basis of their race either directly or indirectly in the private housing rental market;
2. Experiences of Aboriginal people and people from CaLD backgrounds who believe they have suffered less favourable treatment in the private housing rental market based on their race;
3. The possible causes and appropriate remedies for addressing race based discrimination in the private housing rental industry.

Thank you for making available to us the draft Terms of Reference. Shelter WA is very supportive of the overall thrust of this investigation, and welcomes this initiative.

With regard to the draft Terms of Reference, Shelter WA supports the EOC mandate working toward an inclusive, engaging, respectful and fair Australia. Shelter WA also shares concern for differential service response for people who are racially diverse to dominant Australia. However, Shelter WA has concerns with utilizing such terms as CaLD and Aboriginal, NESB or ATSI in defining racial groups, causing the people of interest definitional barriers, division and segmentation of a recognised widespread problem

Shelter WA recognises that the EOC Terms of Reference as stated above are focusing primarily on race based discrimination and suggests that rather than identifying particular cultural or racial groups (who may then feel more or less deserving, or may wish to

include or exclude other groups), that the Terms of Reference clearly state the discrimination it is investigating - be that race-based discrimination, colour, religious or other. Shelter WA proposes that rather than stating two diverse groups, simply defining "raced based discrimination" is sufficient and escapes the limitations and criticisms of cultural definitions. Shelter WA suggests that this presentation of language would be more definitive and give clarity and breadth in your terms of reference, without opening the EOC to allegations of preferential or unfavourable attention to any particular section.

Such Terms of References would read;

1. Whether persons are discriminated against on the basis of their race either directly or indirectly in the private housing rental market;
2. Experiences of people who believe they have suffered less favourable treatment in the private housing rental market based on their race;
3. The possible causes and appropriate remedies for addressing race based discrimination in the private housing rental industry.

Shelter WA is very supportive of this enquiry and we gladly offer any assistance, participation or contribution within our capacity to the process.

Yours faithfully

Bronwyn Kitching BSW Grad Dip Bus (HRM)
Executive Officer
Shelter WA
First Floor Claisebrook Lotteries House
33 Moore Street
East Perth 6004

Ph: 08) 9325 6660
Fax: 08) 9325 8113
e: bronwyn@shelterwa.org.au

Web: www.shelterwa.org.au