

## EDITORIAL: New Options for Affordable Housing?

by Karel Eringa

The term 'affordable housing' has varying definitions. In its broadest sense, affordable housing refers to any housing that meets some form of affordability criterion. One version of this definition uses the concept of 'housing stress' as its criterion for affordability. The 1992 National Housing Strategy defined housing stress as a household in the bottom two income quintiles paying in excess of 30% of net income. In this broad definition, affordable housing means any housing costing less than 30% of income for the bottom 40% of income earners.

A narrower definition pitches affordable housing as the private sector alternative to public and community housing and is any housing supplied by the private sector that meets some affordability criterion. Again, the criterion used is usually 30% of income, although this narrow definition often includes

middle income earners (ie. part or all of the third quintile) in its target group. This definition effectively recognises that Government funding for public and community housing is decreasing, placing an increased emphasis on the private sector to provide housing for people towards the bottom of the income scale.

Regardless of the definition used, all of the indications are that the amount of affordable housing in Western Australia is falling across all tenures. For home purchasers in regional and metropolitan WA, house prices have increased considerably in recent years. For instance, in December 1998 the median house price in Perth was \$142,500. By December 2002 this had increased to \$194,400 - an increase of 36.4%. As a result, the income required to affordably purchase a median priced home in Perth increased from \$52,168 to \$71,299 over the same period.

In the private rental sector, there is a growing shortage of low cost properties in Perth. On average, however, rent rises in the private sector have not kept pace with house price increases in recent times. Between December 1998 and December 2002 the median rent in Perth rose by 14.7% (from \$136 to \$156 per week), just exceeding the CPI increase of 14.4% for the period. With rising house prices, the rental return on a median priced house in Perth has fallen from just over 5% in December 1998 to 4.2% in December 2002.

In order to cover tenancy management, asset management, maintenance and depreciation costs, rental returns on a typical property should be 6 to 7%. Perth residential rents are currently undervalued by more than 40%, and with vacancy rates now falling, rents in the private rental market are likely to increase significantly over the next 12 to 24 months.

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However, the median rent does not tell the full story. Recent REIWA data shows that vacancy rates are very low at the bottom (affordable) end of the market, but high at the top end. Housing affordability is more likely to get worse for people on low incomes, whereas people on higher incomes may be paying less rent.

The final tenure, social housing, is declining in importance relative to home purchase and private rental. In June 1997, the State Housing Authority owned 39,001 dwellings, or roughly 6.5% of total housing stock in Western Australia. Since then, stock numbers have remained more or less stagnant, falling marginally to 38,872 dwellings by June 2002. However, with recent construction activity rapidly expanding housing in the private sector, social housing now represents less than 5% of total housing stock. In other words, social housing is now an option for a significantly smaller proportion of West Australian households than it was five years ago.

The failure to expand social housing stock is due in part to falling Government funding for social housing, and in part to the policy of 'targeting' people with high needs and low incomes, which increases increased tenancy management costs and reduces rental revenue. This means that the policy of targeting has reduced the financial viability of social housing providers.

Overall, it is evident that there has been a severe decline in housing affordability in Western Australia in recent times. This decline is of concern not only as an issue in itself, but also because housing affordability is widely recognised as one of the key causal factors for a range of social, health and economic problems. Shelter WA has identified three ways in which the decline in housing affordability can be reversed.

The first approach is to increase the amount of Government funded housing in the State. Shelter WA strongly believes that social housing plays an essential role in the Western Australian housing system, providing a safety net for people who have limited housing options in the private sector. A recent paper by Shelter WA demonstrated that a Government funding increase of more than \$65 million plus land costs per year would be required to keep social housing at its current proportion of housing stock. Further increases in Government funding and changes to the policy of targeting would be required to achieve substantial growth in the sector.

The second approach to expanding affordable housing is to encourage the private sector to increase the supply of affordable housing. This is consistent with the narrow definition of affordable housing, and can be achieved either by providing housing

related income supplements to housing consumers or by subsidising housing providers. The drawbacks of both types of subsidy are that they are relatively expensive and provide one off relief, as opposed to the provision of housing stock, which can be used for a period of many years.

Private rental housing is less secure than social housing and most research indicates that social housing is by far the most cost effective way of increasing housing affordability. Nevertheless, Shelter WA believes that the private sector has a role to play in increasing affordable housing, if only because it is four times larger than the social housing sector. However, increasing affordability in the private rental sector would require major adjustments to housing policies, taxes and payments. In particular, a system of incentives for providers to increase the supply of affordable housing should be implemented as part of a National Housing Policy, and Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) should be retargeted to improve its housing affordability outcomes.

The final approach of increasing housing affordability involves innovative partnerships between the private, community and Government sectors. Over the last decade, many such partnerships have been proposed, but few have made it beyond the

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# The Brisbane Housing Company

*With recent interest by the Department of Housing and Works in Western Australia in investigating models of affordable housing companies, and the response to this by the Community Housing Coalition of WA (CHCWA), Shelter WA asked the Brisbane Housing Company to provide us with some information about themselves, which is presented below:*

The Brisbane Housing Company (BHC) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that has been established to provide affordable housing for low-income earners in Brisbane. It is intended as an alternative model for providing social/affordable housing.

The BHC is initially funded by the Queensland State Government and the Brisbane City Council. The Company plans to establish a financially self-sustaining property portfolio based on these initial grants.

The Company is administered by an independent Board of Directors who have been elected by the State Government, Brisbane City Council and the Community Shareholders.

Prior to incorporation extensive consultation was done with community housing groups and the private and church sector. BHC's Community Shareholders include community housing groups, financial institutions, church

groups and organisations like the Property Council of Australia.

The Company has planned its property portfolio to initially include properties within a 7km radius of Brisbane's CBD. The decision to concentrate on the 7km radius was prompted by the fact that extensive redevelopment has occurred in those inner and near city suburbs causing displacement of low income households. The type of accommodation to be offered will include boarding houses, studio apartments and one and two bedroom units.

The first property to be acquired by the BHC is located at Bowen Hills, an inner city suburb of Brisbane, and houses some 70 tenants. The complex comprises a boarding house and self contained apartments. The ground floor units include adaptable units suitable for tenants with a physical disability. Where possible the Company will include adaptable units in future building. The property at Bowen Hills is managed by one of the community groups on the Company's behalf.

Construction has already commenced on another inner city project and tenders have been called for two more schemes. Although BHC is concentrating on properties in inner and near city suburbs, it is not excluded from constructing properties in other

areas of Brisbane in the future.

Homes will be offered to tenants at below market rent. The BHC has been structured in such a way as to maximise its tenants access to the Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

Initially BHC will take referrals from the Queensland Department of Housing's public housing waitlist though this does not exclude other groups referring potential tenants to the Company.

The fact that BHC is an independent, not-for-profit company has enabled it to receive registration as a charity, a gift recipient and a public benevolent institution.

## CHCWA - DHW Presents Questionable Model

*Recently, the Community Housing Coalition of WA (CHCWA) auspiced a presentation by Robert Heaton from the Department of Housing and Works, to discuss the work he had been doing on developing alternative finance models. Although the presentation covered various possibilities, the subsequent discussion focused on a model similar to the Brisbane Housing Company. A number of interesting issues were raised, and Shelter WA asked CHCWA to present its views in this newsletter. This resulted in the following article:*

In an apparent attempt to better provide affordable housing to West Australians, the Department of Housing and Works has been researching the relatively new concept in Australia of establishing not-for-profit housing companies to achieve this aim. The results of their research so far were presented to community housing providers by Robert Heaton on Friday 4th April 2003.

Robert Heaton and Bob Thomas answered a number of questions from the audience after the presentation. Those responses together with the questions that were not asked that day have left CHCWA concerned that the proposals under consideration are not the best way to meet the ever increasing demand for affordable housing in this State.

The presentation was given at the request of CHCWA as we are concerned that the Department is considering such radical change to existing housing provision in the State without having consulted non-government housing groups.

Not-for-profit housing companies currently operate in some form in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. The overall aim of these companies is to provide affordable housing to low and moderate income earners in the "near and inner city" by creating a business partnership between private development companies and the government. Initial funding is usually from the State Government and may, in addition, include developer's contributions and proceeds from the sale of government land. An issue to be raised is the source of this Government funding. Is it new money that would not otherwise be available to community housing providers? The intention is that these companies become self-sustaining as a result of a number of financial mechanisms working together - debt can be leveraged against the initial start up funding, the rents from the accommodation is used to service debt as well as maintain the properties and the companies are eligible for tax benefits including GST exemption. Additionally, unlike public housing tenants, tenants in company housing can access Commonwealth Rent Assistance

(CRA) and this enables a rent higher than that of public housing to be charged.

On the surface the concept appears beneficial both to tenants as well as the government. After an initial input of funds to set up the company, the State Government will no longer be required to directly fund affordable housing, instead leaving it to the Commonwealth Government through CRA, GST and other tax benefits. In addition, these companies seek additional tax concessions from local governments through exemption from property tax or rating concessions and from the State Government via exemptions from land tax and stamp duty.

In practice, if the Brisbane Housing Company (BHC) is to be used as a benchmark, the government appears to reap the benefits while the low income tenant is no better off. The aims of affordable housing companies are already met by community housing providers. Providers already house low to moderate income tenants and receive the same benefits from tax concessions and Commonwealth Rent Assistance without being an ongoing drain on the public purse. Why does the Government seek to spend considerable sums of money establishing an entity that will duplicate work already being done by the community housing sector?

## CHCWA continued...

The main aim of these housing companies is to provide good quality affordable housing in the near and inner city to low and moderate income earners. The generally acknowledged definition of "Affordable Housing" and that used both in Robert Heaton's presentation and to justify the BHC's establishment is "housing that is available to households in the lowest two income quintiles without having to pay more than 30% of household income in housing costs." This however does not appear to be achieved by the BHC model.

To ensure tenants can capture CRA and that the company can maintain its GST free status, rents cannot be set above 75% of the market value of supply. To also ensure that tenants are not suffering housing stress rents must not be higher than 30% of a tenant's household income. In its funding prospectus and business plan, the BHC provides tables indicating affordability of its housing available in near and inner city Brisbane. The table for the inner city provides rental costs and income information for 11 groups of people who are likely to be tenants of

BHC. Of those 11 groups, only 4 groups will be required to pay less than 30% of their household income on rent. Explanatory information to this table clearly states that this housing will be "unaffordable for many households on base social security benefits. Target market is lower-income households that have extra income."

In his presentation, Robert Heaton provided statistics that showed 70% of private renters in WA are in housing stress before receiving CRA. Of those 32% are still in housing stress after CRA and 47% of single people remain in housing stress after CRA. These are alarming figures, but if the statistics produced by the BHC affordability tables are any indication, this housing stress is unlikely to be relieved by the establishment of a similar company in this State.

Community housing already delivers the same outcomes as those of the proposed housing companies. In its 2001 State election housing policy, the Labor government praised community housing for its ability to provide more affordable housing per dollar spent than Homeswest. Additionally, community housing

also already captures Commonwealth Rent Assistance and the tax advantages listed above. The question must be asked once more, why spend potentially large sums of money to establish a body to achieve outcomes, when those same outcomes are already being achieved by community housing groups? Why reinvent the wheel? In relation to this point, Bob Thomas and Robert Heaton were asked whether a study has been conducted to compare the outcomes between investing in the proposed company and investing the same amount of money in key community housing providers as discussed in the Strategic Plan for Community Housing in WA. The answer was no. The idea had not even been raised before. Such a study on the BHC would likely be fruitless at present however, as the Company has only released its business plan and taken management of the Bowen Hills housing project within the last month.

The BHC has been promised start-up funding of \$60 million from the Queensland Government and the Bris-

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***In response to CHCWA's concerns, the Department of Housing and Works issued the following statement:***

General Manager of Housing and Facilities Bob Thomas said that the Department of Housing and Works has not yet decided on any particular model for not-for-profit housing. "We are still at the stage of seeking legal advice on a range of issues related to this," Mr Thomas said. "Be assured that financial modelling will be undertaken to determine whether the concept offers advantages over existing systems."

# National Shelter Policy Platform - 2003

National Shelter has recently developed a Policy Platform entitled 'Rebuilding the Australian Dream - National Shelter Policy Platform 2003'. This follows on from its 2001 Election Platform, 'Affordable Housing for All'. The Platform aims at improving housing outcomes for the eight million Australians who receive the lowest incomes and are most affected by the lack of housing that they can afford.

The Platform operates from the premise that the housing system in Australia is changing, with home ownership now out of the reach of a large percentage of Australians, and rents are becoming less affordable for people on low to moderate incomes. Incomes at the bottom end are falling, there are severe shortages of low cost rental housing and houses for purchase, and housing affordability is being recognised as the key causal factor

for a range of social, health and economic problems.

Housing is central to people's quality of life, and it follows that housing policy needs to be developed using a whole-of-government approach. National Shelter's Policy Platform identifies four ways in which this can be achieved:

**1. A Commonwealth Housing Department and Housing Minister** - This would integrate the social, economic and environmental influences and policy issues shaping access to affordable and appropriate housing.

**2. A National Housing Policy Framework** - This Policy would provide a broad national framework to evaluate all existing housing related policies and programs.

**3. A Target for Social Housing** - increase social housing as a key element of any National Housing Policy because it provides housing for people who have limited access to the private sector.

**4. An Affordable Housing Innovation Unit** - Such a Unit could provide budget support to test, facilitate and promote innovative approaches to low-income housing provision.

[Click here to download National Shelter's Policy Platform,](#)

[or click here to download a Background Paper](#)

[or access both via www.shelterwa.org.au \(housing news\).](#)



# Housing Strategy WA - Update

In September 2001, the Minister for Housing and Works announced the development of Housing Strategy WA, which will provide Western Australia's first comprehensive housing strategy. The Office of Policy and Planning in the Department of Housing and Works has responsibility for preparing the draft strategy that will be available for public consultation later this year.

In consultation with the Housing Advisory Committee and other stakeholders, the Housing Strategy is being created through a five-stage process, as portrayed in the diagram below. This process was seen as providing a way of identifying emerging gaps in the housing system and developing policy and funding responses to the outcomes.

To date, the State of Play and Drivers components have been completed and virtually

all the Trends and Issues papers are either finished or at the draft stage.

There were several approaches that might have been taken in identifying the key issues and potential responses for a housing strategy. The method used could have been on the basis of housing tenure, location or specific principles.

Following earlier stakeholder discussions on how to develop the strategy, it was decided that there is no definitive way to tackle and present the issues and responses. However, it is apparent that affordability, access/equity and sustainability have become overriding principles that have both location and tenure dimensions. Therefore, the key issues and responses for inclusion in the housing strategy will be developed around these three principles.

Vivienne Milligan has recently been appointed as Project Director for Housing Strategy WA. She has an extensive knowledge and experience of housing policy, both in Australia and overseas, and will provide a guiding hand for the completion of the draft strategy by early July 2003.

The current timetable for the development and finalisation of Housing Strategy WA is as follows:

**July 2003:** First draft of strategy completed,

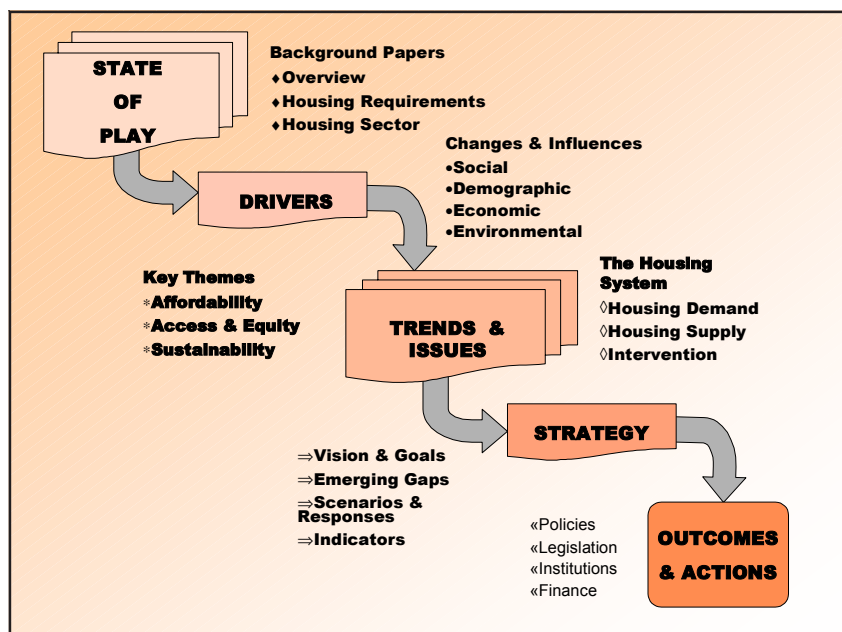
**August - September 2003:** Public consultation on draft strategy,

**October 2003:** Finalise strategy.

Following finalisation, the Minister for Housing and Works will take Housing Strategy WA to State Cabinet for final approval.

The various outputs of Housing Strategy WA are available on the Internet by following the State Housing Strategy link on the Office of Policy and Planning's web site at [www.ohp.dhw.wa.gov.au](http://www.ohp.dhw.wa.gov.au). If you would like to be kept informed of progress on the development of the draft strategy then please contact Linda Cianfagna on 9222 4960 or send her an e-mail on [linda.cianfagna@dhw.wa.gov.au](mailto:linda.cianfagna@dhw.wa.gov.au).

**For further information on the housing strategy, contact Stewart Darby in the Office of Policy and Planning on 9222 4965 or by e-mail on:**  
[stewart.darby@dhw.wa.gov.au](mailto:stewart.darby@dhw.wa.gov.au)



## CHCWA continued...

bane City Council. \$25million is from the State Treasury, with 50% of that being 'new money'. From where this new money was sourced is still unclear. The same question was asked of Robert Heaton and Bob Thomas. The response was that this was not a matter they could discuss at present, although Bob Thomas did assure the audience that the money would not be taken from CSHA funds. So where will the money come from?

Community Housing Canberra Ltd, on the other hand, has been established as an independent company to develop, hold and manage properties that are sublet to local housing providers. It has been set up as an umbrella asset management organisation, with providers responsible for tenancy management. ACT Housing has transferred 209 properties with 20 year leases to the Company to secure its viability. When the issue of transferring properties from WA's Department of Housing to the proposed company was raised during the presentation, Bob Thomas claimed this was not possible as the assets are State owned. The Department does however want other State Departments to transfer their assets in the form of land to the proposed company for development of accommodation. In order to meet the ever increasing demand for accommodation in the near and inner city, the Company will

require access to land for development. Perth, like Brisbane and all other Australian cities, faces a rapidly diminishing stock of affordable land for development. An issue raised by the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition is that in order to ensure the BHC's viability, the Company will need to grow at a constant rate but without affordable land for redevelopment, the only other way to achieve growth is absorb existing housing groups or join with existing private/public housing ventures. Whether any of the parties involved would be agreeable is questionable. This is not proposed in the BHC's business plan. Bob Thomas claims that there is appropriate land available for use, although it is owned by other Government departments. He claims the issue of ownership will not prove problematic. Until the land is legally owned by the Department and then transferred to the proposed company, this fact cannot and should not be relied upon. Despite a complete lack of consultation with our sector on the proposed establishment of a not-for-profit housing company the Department has in place a time line for implementation is of immense concern. The time line offers no opportunity for wider public or sector consultation but it gives a date of 1st July 2004 for the start of the Company. The Department's solution to the lack of consultation with the community housing sector was that the

sector could tender for management of some of the properties owned by the new company.

The Department is already in consultation with the Australian Tax Office and other Government stakeholders in relation to its proposed company. To have reached this level of discussion surely indicates the Department is decided on taking this route and it is simply a matter of when, not if, the not-for-profit housing company comes into being.

The Brisbane Housing Company was created because Community Housing Providers in Queensland did not have the expertise to handle large developments. Initially Queensland Community Housing Coalition approached the Brisbane City Council in regards to creating a Trust which would lead to the provision of affordable housing in the city. The Queensland Department of Housing became involved and for twelve months the community sector was not consulted as the Brisbane Housing Company Model was developed. In November 2001 "The Foundation Meeting" was held which "allowed community groups to have a say in how the Company will be established and operated."

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design phase. One model that has received much publicity lately as a potential option for replication in Western Australia is that of the Brisbane Housing Company, which is itself loosely based on the City West Housing model operating in Sydney.

The Brisbane Housing Company is described in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter. There are a number of questions regarding the concept that need to be answered satisfactorily before it could be implemented successfully in WA.

Firstly, who would a prospective WA Housing Company house? In order to take pressure off social housing waiting lists, the Company should draw at least some of its tenants from the existing public and community housing waiting lists. The problem is that in order to be financially viable, a WA Housing Company would house only those applicants with relatively high incomes and low management requirements. Public and community housing would be left with those on lower incomes and present-

ing higher needs, thus further exacerbating the negative effects of targeting on the financial viability of social housing providers discussed above.

Secondly, how would a WA Housing Company relate to the community housing sector? This newsletter contains an article by the Community Housing Coalition of WA explaining this in detail.

Thirdly, what happens if and when market rents increase? Since most tenants of a WA Housing Company would pay a market related rent, their rents would increase in line with the private sector. In this scenario, housing provided by the Company could become unaffordable for a large part of its target group. The concept could therefore entail allocating significant Government resources with very uncertain outcomes regarding long term affordability.

Finally, where would a WA Housing Company operate? Financial imperatives would require the Company to operate stock in a very compact geographical area,

making it unlikely that the concept could be implemented in regional or remote areas. Yet at the same time some of the worst housing problems occur in regional and remote areas of WA.

Overall, Shelter WA supports the development of innovative measures to increasing housing affordability, provided that these initiatives are additional to, rather than instead of, other approaches such as social housing and rent assistance. While innovative approaches may be a good way of making some progress on affordable housing, the extent of the problem is such that significantly more funding is required even if these innovative measures can be implemented successfully.

The recent National Shelter Policy Platform (enclosed with this newsletter), argues that large improvements in housing affordability can be achieved by redesigning housing assistance.

*This editorial is a summary of Shelter WA Occasional Paper 2003-1: New Options for Affordable Housing? available from [www.shelterwa.org.au](http://www.shelterwa.org.au) (housing news).*

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## EOC Investigation into Public Housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (Western Australia)

The Equal Opportunity Commission is conducting an investigation into public housing for Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander People in Western Australia. If you or someone close to you are or have been:

\* a tenant of the Department of Housing and Works (formerly Homeswest)

\* an applicant

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# Homeswest Page - Policy Changes

## **Absentee Rent policy is to be replaced with Absentee Tenant Minimum Rent policy and is as follows:**

**12:** Tenants required to enter into specific supported accommodation will have their rent reduced to the minimum rent of \$10.00 per week for a period of three months.

**12.1** This is applicable to tenants who are entering into a specific rehabilitation program, respite care, nursing homes and outpatient treatment where they are required to pay rent or lodgings to another organisation.

**12.2** Tenants who are escaping Domestic Violence and are residing in a Women's Refuge will have their application for Absentee Tenant Minimum Rent policy considered after a minimum of seven (7) days in a Women's Refuge. The tenant must provide documentation to verify that they are residing in a refuge and unable to return to their tenancy. Verification may include letter from the women's refuge, copy of current violent restraining orders, support letter from the Police Domestic Violence Resource and Referral Centre. The letter must advise the reason why they are unable to return to their property. (Refer to Family & Domestic Violence policy)

**12.3** Public housing tenants are eligible for Centrelink rent assistance when in supported accommodation.

**12.4** Tenant's file to be placed in "bring up" for review at the end of three months. Minimum rent can be cancelled at any time during the three-month period.

**12.5** If there are other household members the subsidy is reassessed on their income only and no details are entered for the tenant.

**12.6** Tenants are to provide supporting documentation verifying that they are entering into a specific program to be entitled to the Absentee Tenant Minimum Rent policy. Should they remain in a specific program or are absent from the property for a period that is less than three months Homeswest is to be advised immediately they return to the tenancy and a new subsidy form is to be completed and submitted to Homeswest.

**12.7** Homeswest is to be advised of relevant contact address and telephone number/s and who will be taking care of the property for the duration of the absence. Homeswest will enter into negotiations with the tenant or nominated person in regard to who will be taking care of the property during the tenant's absence from the property.

## **Priority Policy:**

There has also been a change to the wording and clarification to the Priority policy section 1 and the changes are as follows:

■ Where an applicant requires accommodation in order to take a child out of care (to reunite child/children with family) or where the fostering of a child/children limits housing options.

■ Homelessness (Definition - as per the Homeless Taskforce) Primary - someone sleeping rough i.e. in the park, under bridges is considered grounds for priority assistance.

■ Secondary are those in crisis accommodation or staying with friends/relatives. Tertiary where people are living in insecure accommodation such as boarding houses, caravan parks or rooming houses (Secondary and Tertiary homelessness are considered as part of the priority process).

## **CENTRELINK:**

The Department of Housing and Works will shortly commence the Income Confirmation Scheme (ICS) with Centrelink.

The ICS allows for the electronic exchange of income details for tenants receiving Centrelink benefits. Tenant/s and household members must complete Income Confirmation Service Consent Authority form to participate in ICS and lodge the form with Homeswest (Not Centrelink).

Tenants in occupation prior to February 2003 were advised of the ICS in a mail out in

## Homeswest Page

February 2003. Those tenants had the option of completing the cancellation form and returning it to the Department. Where no cancellation form was received from the tenant/s then the Department will presume the tenant has consented to the exchange of information.

Tenant/s and or household members have the right not to participate or withdraw from the ICS at anytime by completing the Cancellation from Income Confirmation Service form.

The benefits for this scheme in respect to Homeswest tenants in receipt of Centrelink benefits is they will no longer have to complete the annual review forms. At annual inspection time the Accommodation Manager will provide the tenant/s with a copy of household details as per the Income Subsidy screen for them to sign and confirm details are correct, tenants will be provided with a copy for their records.

Tenant/s and or household members who do not wish to participate in ICS for rental

assessment purposes will need to obtain their income details from Centrelink and complete the rental Subsidy form and return to Homeswest.

Tenant/s and or household members whose income is wages/salary or have a mixture of income i.e. Centrelink and wages will still need to complete a Rental Subsidy form and return to Homeswest.

Any queries in relation to the ICS should be directed to the Accommodation Manager for the property.

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## Representatives for Housing Advisory Committee

The Housing Advisory Committee (HAC) is an advisory body to the Minister for Housing and Works. It advises the Minister on housing policy, participates in the development of Department of Housing and Works policy and program initiatives, advises on research and the development of new policies and assists in identifying housing needs in the community.

Recently, three Standing Committees were created to support the HAC. The three committees are the Community Affordable and Sustainable Housing Committee (CASHC), Access and Equity Standing Committee (AESC), and Homeswest Operational Standing Committee (HOSC).

All three Standing Committees are seeking to fill the positions of Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander, Regional, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Representatives. Applications close 4.30pm Friday 30 May 2003 and must be as specified in the Information Kit.

*Go to [www.shelterwa.org.au](http://www.shelterwa.org.au) (housing news) to download the Information Kit or contact Karel Eringa ([karel@shelterwa.org.au](mailto:karel@shelterwa.org.au) or 08 9325 6660) for more information.*

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## EOC Investigation...continued from pg 9

\* on a waiting or priority list

\* homeless

The Equal Opportunity Commission wants to hear your story about your experiences. Consultations are being arranged in metropolitan and regional centres.

Please contact officers at the Commission - Stephen Goodall, Zeta Binge, Marc Newhouse, Sandra Handscomb, Cathy Hollander on 9216 3900 or 1800 198 149 (free call for country callers). All enquiries are confidential.

## Role of Shelter WA

Shelter WA is a peak community managed housing organisation established in 1979, which seeks to represent the views of consumers and community groups on major housing issues. Shelter aims to ensure that every person has access to affordable, appropriate, secure and safe housing that is free from discrimination.

*We do this through:*

- co-ordinating 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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*The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of Shelter WA. If you have any queries or comments regarding the articles in this newsletter, or if you would like to contribute to future Shelter WA newsletters, please contact Karel Eringa by email: karel@shelterwa.org.au or by phone (08) 9325 6660.*



### Membership Application / Renewal

NAME: .....

ORGANISATION: .....

ADDRESS: .....

..... POSTCODE: .....

EMAIL: .....

PHONE: ..... FAX: .....

I enclose a cheque for \$ .00, made out to **Shelter WA**. See reverse for membership details. Fill-out, stamp and mail today!

### Annual Membership Fees (All membership fees include GST)

- Individuals.....\$10.00
- Concession/Students.....\$5.00
- Organisations with budgets under \$100,000.....\$15.00
- Organisations with budgets between \$100,000 & \$200,000.....\$35.00
- Organisations with budgets over \$200,000.....\$50.00