



newsletter

December 2005

EDITORIAL: HOUSING STRATEGY WA

by Karel Eringa

Over the last few months, Shelter WA has been promoting the issue of affordable and appropriate housing in a number of different forums. Arguably the most significant of these is *Housing Strategy WA*, a draft discussion paper of which was launched on 14 September. The consultations announced in our previous newsletter are now under way, with the closing date for submissions set for 28 February 2006.

Housing Strategy WA will have implications on the capacity of the Western Australian housing system to meet the changing needs of the community over the next 25 years. Therefore it is important that a broad range of organisations and members of the community have the opportunity to influence the strategy.

To help facilitate public input to *Housing Strategy WA*, Shelter WA is conducting community consultations using some funding from the Department of Housing and Works. The main target group of these consultations are low income housing consumers, including in particular young people, Indigenous people,

seniors, women, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and Homeswest tenants.

The first stage of the consultations started on Tuesday 13 December in Mandurah. This forum was jointly organised with the Peel Community Legal Service. It was attended by 20 people, which formed a good cross-section of stakeholders in Mandurah's housing sector.

This first forum confirmed the view expressed by Shelter WA at the launch of the discussion paper, namely that the strategy is short on specific targets and financial commitments. The main issues that were stressed by participants were sustainability, affordability and the need for the *Housing Strategy WA* to look at the local and regional level.

Shelter WA's Project Officer, Jim Anthony, is currently working up the outcomes of the forum and conducting background research. Jim is compiling a discussion paper, which will be used to inform a second community forum, to be held jointly with WACOSS in early February 2006.

Following this forum, the second phase of the project will start. This consists of focus groups to be held in

a number of locations across the metropolitan area. These focus groups will target six specific groups of low income housing consumers, being:

- young people,
- Indigenous people,
- seniors,
- women,
- people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and
- Homeswest tenants.

Shelter WA will work closely with partner organisations and aims to tie in with existing meetings as much as possible. However, the process of using separate meetings for different sub-groups will allow Shelter WA to explore the impact of *Housing Strategy WA* on these particular groups in more detail than is possible in meetings that are open to the general public.

We are currently looking for partner organisations with whom to conduct these specific issues focus groups. Please contact Jim Anthony (jim@shelterwa.org.au) or Paul Pendergast (paul@shelterwa.org.au) at Shelter WA if you are interested in being a partner organisation.

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National Housing Conference Reports

by Helen Doran-Wu

Shelter WA secured Lotterywest funding to support organisations with limited resources to attend the National Housing Conference. By close of applications 48 subsidy applications from 36 organisations, requesting a total of \$30 989. After a review process, \$15,000 in subsidies was allocated to 32 delegates from 24 organisations. 10 of these organisations were based in the Perth Metropolitan area, 3 in regional WA and 11 in remote parts of the state. A further 7 applicants from 1 regional and 5 remote organisations were put on the reserve list.

Three recipients of funding were asked to share their experiences and what they had gained at the conference

Julie McKie: Carnarvon Family Support Services Inc., Carnarvon

Julie stated that she really appreciated the opportunity to go to the conference. She said that without the grant, she would not have been able to go. She found that this was a common sentiment expressed by Indigenous people who attended from the remote areas.

She thought that the Indigenous participation rate was excellent. Julie attended the Indigenous stream as 85% of her clients are homeless, or at risk, Aboriginal people.

Julie felt that the best speaker at the conference was Peter Yu. She loved his video presentation and thought that it was very powerful.

Julie came away from the conference with some effective ideas that she could implement. One of the programs included the Helping Hands Crisis Accommodation from NSW. They provide accommodation for homeless men and women. However, instead of building specifically for the homeless, they used motels and caravan parks for housing. Helping Hands is run by volunteers and helps 130-40 people per week.

The other program was the Home Ground Services from Victoria. This service aimed to engage homeless Indigenous people through sport and

recreation. Participants in sport can then find out information about available support services.

Julie felt that both ideas were cost effective and relatively easy to implement without a lot of funding and resources.

She was concerned about the lack of debate at the conference. Julie felt that at a National Housing Conference, recommendations or strategies should have been put forward for government to enact. Not enough time was taken to talk in the sessions to discuss strategies and outcomes.



Janette Taylor: Kurungal Council Inc, Fitzroy Crossing

Janette thought that this was the best conference she had been to. For her, the highlight was the ability to go from the Indigenous program and think about fixing sinks to then go to another room and discuss the national perspective on housing. She felt that coming from a remote area, with limited resources including people, that being exposed to the broad range of ideas was invaluable and intriguing.

Janette mostly attended the Indigenous stream. She found everything very interesting and has come away with some practical strategies she can implement. One of the initiatives came from the Fixing Houses for Better Health program. This involved people who were able to go to the remote communities and fix wide number of problems at one time. This makes more sense than trying to first locate, and then pay high rates, to tradespeople to fix one problem at a time.

Another talk that she wants to follow up on was the idea of supporting

Indigenous people into home ownership and the practicalities of that scheme.

The opportunity to speak to influential people at the dinner was wonderful. Janette had the good fortune of sitting next to senior policy makers and advisors. She spoke to them regarding the implementation of policy in remote areas and the difficulties her organisation and clients had been having. She explained that filling out forms for illiterate people was a real issue and more effective means of communicating needed to be developed.

Zarina Reljanovic: South Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre, Fremantle

Zarina felt that on the whole the conference was well organized and the keynote speakers on the first day were particularly interesting.

Terry Burke spoke on Migrants and Refugees. Terry introduced the idea of Rent Assistance Plus. She felt that this idea could be explored further. Migrants and Refugees have particular issues gaining access to the private rental market. As they have no references, limited English and are on Centrelink, Rent Assistance Plus maybe of great benefit to them.

However, she felt that the conference could have had more speakers who provided practical information that she could use in her work place and with her clients.

She felt that one of the most powerful moments in the conference was Peter Yu's video presentation on Indigenous Housing.

Zarina wanted to note that a national housing conference should develop a national housing model. She felt that the models presented where from the UK and the eastern states and where not applicable to WA. A national housing model could address a broad spectrum of issues and would also be applicable to WA.

Consumer Protection for Boarders and Lodgers

by Rob Spinks (TAS)

The high need for boarders and lodgers to have increased consumer protection has been an issue on the agenda of Tenants Advice Service for some years. In 1995 the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Regional Development prepared a report "Minimum Legislative Standards for residential tenancies in Australasia. This report recommended legislation to protect boarders and lodgers.

TAS' research *Boarding and Lodging Houses: A study of the market, law and options for reform in Western Australia* was conducted and prepared by Dee Da Silva and launched on December 9th at the Ruah Centre (see page 5). The

research investigates the state of the market in WA and analyses the reforms that have been made in other parts of Australia.

Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory all have some form of legislative coverage for boarders and lodgers. In some cases it is through separate legislation and in other cases such as Victoria, it is through amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act. All have varying systems of enforcement and there are clearly lessons to be learnt from all systems.

In WA boarding and lodging houses are registered to meet various local government and health standards but

boarders and lodgers must rely on common law to enforce their direct relationship with an owner or operator. This is unwieldy and leaves some of the most vulnerable people in our society with little real protection.

The research identifies three main problems with the current legislative framework in WA in relation to the boarding and lodging house sector –

- Boarders and lodgers are not defined under the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA) for the purpose of exclusion from coverage under this statute and this lack of clarity can be exploited by unscrupulous operators.

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Boarders and Lodgers Final Report

by Jim Anthony

The September 2005 newsletter provided an interim report of the Shelter WA boarding house project. The main aim of the project was to gain an understanding of the experiences of tenants and managers involved in the unregulated boarding house system in Western Australia.

The final report was released at the launch of the 'Where will they live?' Campaign at the RUAH Centre in Northbridge (see page 5). The following discussion submits some of the report's key findings.

Residents Interviews

Nineteen boarders residing in different boarding house types throughout Metropolitan Perth agreed to take part in the project survey. The interview questions dealt with the lack of legal rights for boarders and sought views on the potential benefits of proposed legislation:

- Over two thirds [79%] of the participants believed gaining the right to sign up to an tenancy agreement as a major benefit flowing from proposed legislation; and
- Nearly half of the boarders [47%] thought that

enforceable consumer protection, the right to have fees explained upfront and enhanced room privacy should also be key elements of proposed legal protection.

Interestingly, over a third of the respondents believed that consumer protection would have the additional effect of inducing more responsible behaviour amongst boarding house tenants. This may have implications for all involved in the boarding house sector and as such is worthy of some further research.

Managers Interviews

The 13 managers that participated in the project espoused some common concerns about proposed boarding house legislation. In particular, when asked how they thought legislation would impact on their operations, 11 out of 13 respondents [85%] expressed concerns about moving from contractual tenancy rights to legal rights. Three main issues come to the fore:

- Restrictions on being able to evict difficult tenants;
- The communal features of boarding houses makes possession rights

inappropriate for boarding house accommodation; and

- Tight profit margins would make it difficult to absorb the financial impacts of proposed legislation.

It should be noted that the managers articulated a broad understanding of the advantage and disadvantages of proposed legislation; two out of three [61%] viewed enhanced housing rights as having the potential to produce a mutually beneficial arrangement between operators and residents.

Conclusion

The final report suggests that consumer protection and lack of supply are the two most pressing issues facing the boarding house sector. The report recommends that the State Government develop a Boarding House Strategy as a matter of urgency. The Strategy should address simultaneously the issues of consumer protection and boarding house supply.

The report can be viewed at www.shelterwa.org.au/publications.htm.

Mandurah Housing Forum

by Paul Pendergast

Shelter WA and Peel Community Legal Services (PCLS) are working in partnership to identify and respond to the housing issues faced by low income consumers in Mandurah.

As part of this partnership key stakeholder meetings will be held and a discussion paper will be developed to form the basis of a local housing forum. The outcomes from the Forum will be incorporated into a final report, which will be used to highlight a range of actions required to respond to the housing needs of low income households in Mandurah.

Over the past two months Shelter WA has been working on a regular basis from the offices of the PCLS and they have informed our consultations with their local knowledge. An important component of identifying key issues comes from interviewing local service providers and consumers about their perceptions.

A Mandurah Housing Forum is due to be conducted in February 2006. The recommendations from the Forum will be compiled by Shelter WA in a report that will be used to promote the actions required to address the housing issues faced by low income housing consumers in Mandurah.

Preliminary consultations indicate that Mandurah is going through rapid

and sustained population growth that is among the highest in Australia. The local housing system is struggling to keep pace with the demands being placed on it and this is contributing to rapidly increasing housing prices and as a consequence some low income households are experiencing dislocation from Mandurah.

The declining levels of housing affordability are likely to be exacerbated by the development of the Mandurah Deviation and the Mandurah Rail Extension which is due to commence operation in 2007. These developments also provide opportunities for the development of affordable housing that is close to transport and services.

The recent announce of the Amarillo Development has also been the source of uncertainty in the community. The Amarillo development is just over the boarder of the City of Mandurah and will be an estimated 12 minutes drive from the Mandurah CBD compared to 15 minutes to Rockingham. When completed, the development will house around 60,000 people. Some of the possible implications of this development for Mandurah's housing system will be considered as part of the Forum Process.

The town centre still has some older style housing that has traditionally offered affordable private rental but these are being lost to

redevelopment. As a consequence low income households seeking affordable rentals are finding themselves searching further a field in their quest for secure housing.

This process is contributing to the local housing system being unable to provide housing for those who cannot access home purchase or private rental. In particular, there is a reported decline in the availability of Homeswest housing and a corresponding growth in their waitlists.

Some groups are more affected than others, both seniors and young people are finding it difficult to access affordable rental housing and there is an apparent shortage of appropriately sized rental properties for these groups.

Mandurah is facing a range of housing issues and some groups are more affected than others. One outcome of this research will be to assess the extent of housing issues faced by the groups listed above. To address these issues will take commitment and cooperation from a range of Government and Community Agencies. The partnership between Shelter WA and the Peel Community Legal Services is one positive step in the direction of addressing the housing needs of low income housing consumers in Mandurah.



State Tax Review Submission

by Helen Doran-Wu

Shelter WA made a submission to the State Tax Review. The following is a brief summary of the report's findings:

The paper considered current economic conditions, the R-Codes, State government planning objectives and their impact on housing provision. In line with Shelter WA's objectives the submission was designed to encourage the provision of affordable and appropriate housing. The State Tax Review Guidelines indicated that initiatives had to be complementary to government programs, not increase compliance costs and be equitable.

The Autumn 2005 economic conditions, as reported by the government, were as follows.

- Dwelling investment was strong but likely to decline in 2005-6 by 1%.

- House prices rose by 11.2% over the year to March 2005.
- CPI increased by 3.2% with rising housing costs being a major contributor
- Ownership transfer costs have increased by 2.2%

The impact conditions were multiple. The effect of increasing housing costs has been to increase CPI and increase house prices. Hence those people on lower incomes will have increasing difficulty finding affordable, appropriate accommodation. This has been compounded by an increase in ownership transferral costs.

In response, Shelter WA recommended that the Department of Treasury and Finance implement the following tax reforms as part of the State Tax Reform process:

1. Develop and implement Housing Incentive Tax Zones to ensure lifestyle, density and housing diversity given economic pressures.
2. Expediently implement exemptions in Stamp Duty on Mortgages and Stamp Duty on Conveyances for the main custodial parent upon divorce.
3. Expediently implement exemptions in Stamp Duty on Conveyances for strata titled units contained within retirement villages.
4. Establish a Joint Committee of State Tax Review and State Housing Strategy task forces to investigate and implement tax incentives, and reforms, to achieve affordable and appropriate housing outcomes.

For further information about the initiatives please view the whole document at www.shelterwa.org.au.

“Where will they live?” Campaign Launch

by Helen Doran-Wu

The “Where will they live?” Campaign launch was attended by 35 people on December 9th, 2005. The campaign was based on the results of research conducted by Shelter WA and TAS, in collaboration with CHCWA and WAAMH, on Boarding and Lodging Houses. The speakers included Karel Eringa (Shelter WA), Rob Spinks (TAS), Dr Shane Greive (Curtin University), Keith Wilson (WAAMH), Frank Lindsay (private landlord) and Mariyon Slany (CHCWA) was MC. The launch was covered by ABC news radio. In a lead up to the launch, publicity was gained in *The West Australian* (State Edition), *Nightline* (6PR) and *Morning Magazine* (RTR FM).

The speakers discussed the loss of boarding and lodging houses in the metro area. Of concern was the need to meet future growing demand and the increasing diversity of clients. Karel Eringa acknowledged that increasing compliance costs and the necessity for consumer protection needed to be balanced with meeting supply. The age of building stock,

the age of the majority of landlords combined with increasing land values are acting as disincentives to maintaining lodging houses, let alone increasing supply.

Shane Greive drew further comparisons to the experience of the USA where different strategies have been used to meet the diverse demand. It was acknowledged by the audience that one of the key demographics affected by the closures where people with mental illness. Currently, there is a large unregulated private rental market that caters for their needs. However, it was suggested that due to lack of powers by local Health Dept. officials, organisations were unable to help those people that were stuck in poor living conditions.

Regulated private hostels were identified by speakers as closing down either due to compliance costs or business decisions to cater to different clienteles. This resulted in people with mental illness becoming more vulnerable to the unregulated market or homelessness.

Frank Lindsay suggested that it was possible to run a financially successful lodging house. However, experience showed that local councils have very limited planning guidelines for opening lodgings. This made the process of planning a proposal and conducting community consultation very difficult, expensive and drawn out. He felt that public private partnerships were needed to meet both demand and increasing costs.

In conclusion the government was requested to:

1. Develop and implement a Boarding and Lodging House Strategy in WA.
2. The Strategy will be based on:
 - a) Maintaining the existing stock
 - b) Injecting capital to increase supply
 - c) Developing appropriate consumer protection mechanisms

A stakeholders forum will be held on December 16th. The forum will discuss the future direction of the Campaign

Paper: Workforce Disincentives

by Karel Eringa

The 2003-2008 Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) lists workforce disincentives for public housing tenants as one of the major areas of work. At the recent National Housing Conference, Shelter WA's Executive Officer, Karel Eringa, delivered a paper on this issue. The paper presented an overview of rent to income and eligibility policies in the eight Australian States and Territories, focusing on Western Australia and New South Wales.

The paper found that the CSHA's focus with regard to workforce disincentives is the income related rents applied in public housing, implicitly assuming that this policy causes disincentives to work that are substantially greater than for households in other tenures. The Agreement also implicitly assumed that financial factors are the most important, if not the only factor in a person's decision to enter or re-enter the workforce. However, this point is arguable.

The paper therefore asked three questions regarding the importance of financial workforce disincentives in public housing:

1. Are workforce disincentives faced by public housing tenants greater than for households residing in other tenures?
2. Are workforce disincentives faced by public housing tenants in Western Australia greater than those faced under the proposed new system in New South Wales?
3. Is the rent setting system used in public housing a major factor in creating workforce disincentives?

Its paper's key findings included:

- Financial workforce disincentives are caused primarily by the rapid loss of Centrelink benefits as salaries rise.
- Nevertheless, in the majority of situations public housing tenants face greater financial workforce disincentives than people in other tenures. However, there are a number of situations household

types and income ranges in which private sector tenants are in the worst position with regard to workforce incentives.

- The proposed changes to the NSW public housing system will produce financial workforce disincentives that are far greater than those produced by the WA public housing system, even if differences in rent levels between the two states are ignored.
- The main causal factor of higher financial workforce disincentives faced by public housing tenants is not, as is commonly assumed, related to the rent to income policy. Instead, the threat of losing eligibility for public housing and the associated drop in the level of housing subsidy received appears to be the main determining factor.

The full paper includes 15 key findings and six implications for policy direction. It is available from www.shelterwa.org.au/occasional_papers.htm.

Consumer Protection Cont'd

- WA has no legislation that directly regulates the relationship between boarders/lodgers and owners, so market participants must rely on common law in relation to such matters as bond lodgement, abandoned goods and contractual disputes generally.
- The current registration system in relation to lodging houses (for the purpose of health and safety) is difficult to enforce because imposing work orders might cause closures and vulnerable residents might face the possibility of primary homelessness.

While TAS is primarily interested in consumer protection, it became obvious early in the research that the rapidly diminishing boarding house stock could not be treated as a separate issue. As demand for beds increases the potential for

unscrupulous operators to operate in the market becomes greater and the likelihood of consumers enforcing their rights becomes less.

The research makes 5 recommendations:

1. The various tiers of government work collaboratively to increase the supply of boarding and lodging houses in WA.
2. The state (and local) governments develop a system to "package" existing government services (currently spread out over a number of departments) such as health, guardianship, housing/utilities and transport.
3. The *Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA)* be amended to incorporate Regulations and/or a Code of Conduct in relation to boarding and lodging houses.

4. The legislation should provide (a) clear definition/s regarding the boarding and lodging houses that are covered by the law and such (a) definition/s should provide the most vulnerable boarders and lodgers with legislative coverage.
5. Legislative change should be accompanied by an education program and more funding of advocates.

TAS believes this research paper is an important step toward ensuring that the Question "Where will they live?" will soon have an answer that we as citizens of the affluent state of WA can be proud. This however can only occur if government provides a comprehensive strategy that addresses both supply and consumer protection issues for boarders and lodgers.

Final Report: Housing in Hedland

by Karel Eringa

Earlier this year, Shelter WA conducted a series of community consultations in Port Hedland. The final report on these consultations has now been released

The report characterises Hedland as a town of 20,000 that provides housing to 12,000 people. A severely dysfunctional housing market acts as a key bottleneck that curtails the town's economic development and is a key cause of many of its social problems. Hedland caters poorly to many of its residents, with many workers staying in caravan parks or 'dongas' for extended periods of time, very little appropriate housing available for people in service industries and Indigenous people depending on Homeswest for their housing needs.

With regard to the economic cycle, Hedland's housing market is subject to the economic cycles of the mining industry, with accompanying fluctuations in demand for housing. Decision makers are allowing these fluctuations to persist, on the assumption that any increase in demand for housing will only be temporary, ie. until the next downturn of the economic cycle. However, the long term application of this type of reasoning has had three very unfortunate consequences.

Firstly, in the context of an economic cycle, a 'temporary' increase in demand may persist anywhere between a few years and several decades. During this period, a substantial proportion of Hedland-based workers will be inadequately housed. It may be argued that these workers are at liberty to make some sacrifices regarding their housing situation for monetary gain. However, this ignores the fact that the community consultations showed that in some cases the monetary gain can be very limited. More importantly, housing is a human right, which is breached when people are asked to live in substandard housing in order to gain employment.

In other words, under-investment in adequate housing condemns a significant number of people to secondary homelessness, on the basis that this "will only be temporary" and that they may be compensated with a well-paid job. Neither of these assumptions

necessarily holds true. However, the breach of the right to adequate housing is most definitely real, and may persist for many years.

A second unfortunate effect of the inadequate response to 'temporary' increases in housing demand by supplying substandard accommodation is that Hedland, despite its size and status as a regional centre, is still as vulnerable to fluctuations in the mining cycle as much smaller mining towns. The failure to address the housing needs of such a large proportion of its residents has had flow-on effects into the rest of Hedland's housing market. This is characterised by high prices, often poor maintenance, lack of diverse accommodation stock, homelessness, overcrowding and at the same time underoccupancy.

The response has again been piecemeal. Specific groups have their housing heavily subsidised, including at the top end of the income scale the employees of large mining companies and at the bottom end Homeswest tenants. Many State and Local Government employees also have access to subsidised housing.

The crunch with regard to housing is felt by residents who are not eligible for public housing due to their income, but whose employer does not subsidise their housing. Due to low housing standards and large fluctuations in rents and housing prices, Hedland has great difficulty attracting people to work in its service industries, including doctors and dentists, child care workers, store managers and so on. The resulting lack of services further reduces the attractiveness of the town as a place to settle permanently. As a result, people leave town as soon as employment opportunities in the mining sector fall, thus exacerbating the severity of the economic cycle.

The final consequence of Hedland's failure to provide adequate housing to all of its residents is that those on low income, particularly the Indigenous population, face a poverty trap. Whilst they are on low incomes, they are eligible for Homeswest accommodation where they pay 25% of their income in rent. However, should they find employment, they are likely to lose their Homeswest accommodation. Unless their

employer subsidises their housing, this means that they will likely be financially worse off.

A solution to Hedland's housing problem is a precondition to both its economic and social development. The severity of the economic cycle, the lack of services, and the dependence of the Indigenous population on Homeswest for its housing all stem from a common source: a lack of appropriate and affordable housing. Any solution must start with a recognition by all key players that Hedland can no longer afford not to cater for the housing requirements of such a substantial proportion of its residents. The town must provide housing for all of its residents, and stop regarding housing needs generated by economic activity as 'temporary'.

The only way forward is for industry, State and Local Government to come together to develop a housing strategy for Hedland. Any strategy must address the consequences of poor planning in the past, which include the creation of segregated populations, conflict between industrial and residential users, poor road access between Port and South Hedland, a shortage of affordable land for development due to restrictions resulting from native title claims, different land tenures, appropriate zoning and proximity to flood plains.

The particular needs of a number of specific groups, including Indigenous people, young people, seniors, large families and singles, must also be met. Overcrowding and homelessness need to be addressed with a range of strategies, including medium term exit housing and a range of support options.

While there seems to be a growing recognition that Hedland needs to address its housing crisis in a sustainable manner to meet the challenges of the growing economy, the main political challenge for the area is to identify a driver for change. The role of the driver would be to create a united vision for Hedland and then bring together the different community, political and industrial bodies who have invested both time and financial resources in the area.

The report will be available from www.shelterwa.org.au early in the new year.

Editorial Cont'd

In addition to its work on the *Housing Strategy WA*, Shelter WA has been busy working on a number of other projects. Firstly, three of our staff members attended the National Housing Conference, which was held in Perth in late October. Shelter WA's Executive Officer, Karel Eringa, presented a paper on workforce disincentives in public housing in WA and NSW. A brief overview of this paper is contained on page 6 of this newsletter.

In addition, a \$15,000 grant from Lotterywest allowed us to provide

that the State Government develop a Boarding House Strategy as matter of urgency.

This report was released at the launch of the 'Where will they live?' Campaign at the RUAH Centre in Northbridge on 9 December. This campaign is a collaboration between, Shelter WA, Tenants Advice Service, WA Association for Mental Health and Community Housing Coalition WA. The campaign calls on State, Commonwealth and local governments to come together and develop a Boarding and Lodging

Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
from all at Shelter WA

subsidies to 32 delegates from 24 organisations to attend the Conference. The experiences of some of these delegates are described in an article on page 2 of this newsletter. Finally, Shelter WA chaired a concurrent session and helped organise an exhibition booth for National Shelter at the Conference.

Secondly, we have continued our work on boarding and lodging houses. Shelter WA's Project Officer, Jim Anthony, produced a final report on a project investigating the key issues facing this sector. Based on some 35 face to face interviews with boarding house residents and operators, the report concludes that consumer protection and a lack of supply are the two most pressing issues facing the boarding house sector. As these issues are intimately interrelated, the report recommends

House Strategy in WA. Such a strategy should ensure the following:

- Maintain the existing stock
- Inject capital to increase supply
- Develop appropriate consumer protection mechanisms

A broader stakeholders' forum will be held on December 16th. This forum will determine the future direction of the Campaign.

Finally, this newsletter contains an article by Rob Spinks from the Tenants Advice Service discussing the need for consumer protection for boarders and lodgers, an overview of a local housing forum to be held by Shelter WA and the Peel Community Legal Service in Mandurah early next year, Shelter WA's submission to the State Tax Review, and a News in Brief section.

Shelter WA

Shelter WA is Western Australia's peak independent housing organisation. Shelter WA is community managed and represents the views of consumers and community groups on major housing issues. Shelter WA 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.

Newsletter Production

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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 (details below).

While we are happy to consider any articles submitted for publication, we reserve the right to edit material in consideration of space, content and relevance.

**The views expressed
in this newsletter do
not necessarily reflect
those of Shelter WA.**

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