



Shelter WA Update

August 2008

Creating Room in the Boom – CRiB Campaign Sector Briefing

The Creating Room in the Boom (CRiB) campaign group, comprising of Shelter WA, the Community Housing Coalition of WA, WACOSS and the Tenants Advice Service, held a Sector Briefing and Consultation during Homeless Persons Week on Friday 8th August from 10am – 12pm. The group launched their recommendations to address community service bottlenecks and gaps, rental housing stress experienced by low-income and otherwise disadvantaged households and the overall shortage of appropriate, secure and affordable housing.

The Creating Room in the Boom campaign group identified four key issues that need addressing in WA:

1. **A significant shortage of social housing**
2. **Large numbers of people in housing affordability stress**
3. **Lack of tenants' rights**
4. **Funding shortage for homelessness services and staff**

These objectives were well received by participants, who also in places felt more could be elaborated in addressing the need.

The group will be holding another sector briefing on Tuesday 26th August at Claisebrook Lotteries House 2:00 – 4:00 pm. So please come along if you were not able to attend the last one or if you have more to say!

Please bring relevant case studies which highlight your experiences of the housing crisis in WA. Please RSVP to: Shelter WA, 9325 6660 or corinne@shelterwa.org.au

Homeless Persons Week: 4th – 8th of August

Homeless Persons commenced on the Monday, the 4th of August in Forrest Place, Perth at 7.30am. Many events and activities were held during the week to highlight homelessness including The St Patrick's Starlight Hotel Choir, Spirit of the Streets – The Big Issue Choir, Alex Leitch – Music Entertainment, Plastic Flower Making – St Bartholomew's and Exhibition Stalls on the day, 'Street Talk' surveys for the CRiB campaign, Youth Affairs Council Photo Art Exhibition was launched and much more.



Bronwyn Kitching, Executive Officer, Shelter WA and Keiko Miyazaki, Shelter WA Curtin University Bachelor of Social Work Practicum Student in Forrest Place at the launch of Homeless Persons Week Monday 4th August.



Senate Select Committee on Housing Affordability, The Senate Report: A Good House is Hard to Find. Housing Affordability in Australia

On 19 June 2008, the Senate Select Committee on Housing Affordability published the report - A good house is hard to find: housing affordability in Australia. This report seeks to set out the facts, analyse the causes and discuss some remedies to the problem of housing affordability in Australia.

Shelter WA made a submission and presentation to this Select Committee when it convened in Perth for a public hearing on the 8th of April 2008. The Committee inquired into seven areas and their impact on housing affordability and Shelter WA addressed each Term of Reference and offered general and additional recommendations that fell outside these criteria.

The final report notes that, according to certain measures, housing affordability in Australia is at a record low. In the early 1980s the average house price in Australia's capital cities was a little over three times average earnings. By 2007 it had risen to more than seven times average earnings.

The report argues that for some families the lack of affordable housing represents a serious problem and advocates a holistic approach to matching supply and demand, balancing the interests of aspiring and existing homeowners as part of a gradual process of shifting the emphasis of government programmes at all levels from measures that add to demand for housing to those which promote the supply of affordable housing.

Download the final report at: http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/hsaf_ctte/report/index.htm

Read Shelter WA's submission on the Shelter WA webpage:

http://www.shelterwa.org.au/publications/papers_reports/2008/Senate_HA_committee_response_March08.pdf

National Compact and a Human Rights Act

A National Compact for Australia involves establishing an effective relationship between the Government and the non-government sector. This is in-line with the new governments' social inclusion agenda to both recognise the social and economic value of the sector, as well as its independence and to provide a vehicle for consulting on and achieving social inclusion priorities. A National Compact will strengthen capacity within the sector to deliver efficient and effective services and promote innovative policy responses to community needs. It would include a statement of purpose and values, and roles and responsibilities. Strong consultation, implementation and evaluation plans with frameworks for dialogue and policy development. This is an impressive step towards increasing and strengthening communication between the government and non-government sector and increase the value of both the sectors. Partnership is needed to wholly address the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised groups to improve policy and programs – the people who we are working for.

In addition a push in Western Australia needs to be made for a Human Rights Act. Such an Act was drafted last year for Western Australia, however no further action has been taken to legislate.

Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory have already enacted human rights laws through their respective parliaments. A human rights act is one tool to promote human rights values and enables policy makers to benchmark new policy against these agreed values, individuals and organisations to agitate for better public services; and courts to decide disputes using these rights as a framework.

In addition the ACT have also endorsed their ACT Homelessness Charter, and the New South Wales Government introduced their Protocol for Homeless People. These help ensure that homeless people are treated appropriately and receive services if they need, or request them. It is an important element in preventing homelessness and responding effectively when it occurs.

To effectively move forward in Western Australia to prevent homelessness we need to support such initiatives that provide at least a framework on human rights, building support and discussion and in turn action around these issues.

Visit www.tascoss.org.au/Portals/0/News/Stephens%20speech.pdf for more information on the discussion around the National Compact.

