



# Shelter WA Update

## May 2009

### National Shelter Seniors Housing Forum in WA Preliminary Findings

The recent Seniors Housing Forums held by National Shelter consultant Roland Naufal, and supported by Shelter WA in Perth highlighted the problem issues for seniors in accessing affordable appropriate and well located housing. A significant lack of small affordable rental housing for seniors in rural and regional areas, coupled with high rents and low vacancy rates across WA has seen higher numbers of older people in housing stress and at risk of homelessness. It is also reported that older people are accessing emergency relief, food and financial assistance in larger numbers than ever before. The final report is expected by end of June. The background literature review is available here:

[http://www.sheltertas.org.au/about/pdf/2009%20Entries/natshelter\\_seniors.pdf](http://www.sheltertas.org.au/about/pdf/2009%20Entries/natshelter_seniors.pdf)

### Positions Vacant at Shelter WA

Shelter WA currently has 2 positions vacant and is very keen to welcome new staff to our small dedicated team. The jobs were advertised in the West Australian newspaper on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May. We are seeking a Research Manager to fill a permanent part-time role and a Project Officer part-time for a 12 week contract. The Research Manager is classified at Level 6-7 (65-73K pro rata) on the recently ratified EBA at 30 hrs/wk. This role undertakes qualitative and statistical analysis, consultation and information dissemination, runs forums and workshops. The Project Development Officer is classified at Level 5 (60-63K pro rata) 12 wk contract 20-30 hrs/wk. This job entails exploring the formation of a housing consumer reference group and includes sector mapping, scoping consultation models and recommending a methodology. To apply, contact Shelter WA for the job description, including selection criteria by telephone 9325 6660 or email [admin@shelterwa.org.au](mailto:admin@shelterwa.org.au). **Applications close 4 pm 1st Jun**

### June 2 Focus Group Exploring the Formation of Housing Consumers Reference Group

Western Australia lacks a tenants union or residents' collective group that can effectively consider national and state housing policy and the implementation of new affordable housing funding and initiatives. Other Australian states have well established groups advocating for tenants rights and actively lobbying for consumer protections for tenants.

With current national focus on issues such as

- Australia wide harmonised Residential Tenancies Legislation,
- combined waiting lists for Public and Community Housing,
- a national regulatory framework for Community Housing Providers,
- national regulation for tenancy databases and
- mandatory rent deductions for social housing tenants;

now is the time to bring together consumers of social and affordable housing to consult with about these changes.

Shelter WA will be holding a Focus group with social housing providers and other stakeholders on the afternoon of June 2<sup>nd</sup> to explore the potential for the establishment of a mechanism to bring effective Consumer Voices into this space. If you would like to be included in this Focus Group please contact Shelter WA. A flyer will be circulated separately

### Social Housing Taskforce

The Social Housing Taskforce has considered the preliminary paper drawn from meetings and consultation with stakeholders over the past 5 months, and is due to complete its work at the end of June. The final report from the Taskforce is anticipated to identify the barriers, opportunities and areas of reform that can be recommended to improve the capacity, sustainability and effectiveness of the social housing sector to deliver appropriate affordable and secure housing to those households that require government assistance to meet their accommodation and support needs.

### WA Budget Disappoints Non-Government Employees, But Maintains Indexation Formula

Despite recognition that non-government employees working in the not-for profit sector are grossly underpaid by comparison to public sector roles with similar levels of skill and responsibility, the Treasurer has not committed State monies to a 30% increase for funded service provider organisations that was called for by the Community Employers Group and the Australian Services Union. While this is understandable in the current economic climate, this issue will not go away and appropriate action to address the disparity will be needed in the future. However, Shelter WA commends the Government for maintaining the indexation formula for non-government services that was negotiated in 2003/4 to deliver funding indexation at 80% of the Wage Rate Index + 20% CPI. For more information or to join the ASU to lobby for fair pay telephone 9427 7777

