

SWA Update: Shelter WA Housing News – 22 January 2007

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1. Housing Advisory Committee Disbanded

Since mid 2006 the Department of Housing and Works has been engaged in a process of review and restructure. As part of this process the DHW and the Minister for Housing and Works, Michelle Roberts have decided to reconstitute the HAC with new terms of reference and a new title – Housing Minister's Forum.

As a result the Homeswest Operational Standing Committee (HOSC) has been wound up. The HOSC was responsible for reviewing and developing Homeswest operational policies. Shelter WA is working with the Department to establish a replacement mechanism for reviewing Homeswest operational policy.

The role of the Housing Minister's Forum will be to:

- Operate as a source of advice to the minister for Housing and Works on issues relating to the provision of social housing and the identification of the housing needs of the community, either on the initiative of the Forum or at the request of the Minister;
- Provide advice on the development of new policies and guidelines in areas of perceived need;
- Provide a forum to report on related activities, new initiatives, or achievements of the DHW; and
- Provide an opportunity for interaction and consultation between key stakeholders in related housing delivery areas.

2. Homelessness Report

In December 2006, Shelter WA completed its annual report into homelessness in WA. The homelessness series has been running since 2001. Participating agencies were asked to complete 1 Survey form for each homeless household on the night of Tuesday 5th September 2006. A total of 42 Surveys were completed with information on 91 homeless people. Key findings from *A Profile of Households Experiencing Homelessness in Western Australia, Survey 7* revealed that:

- Indigenous persons accounted for more than one in three homeless persons (41%) and nearly one third of homeless households (29%). These latest results reflect the results from previous Shelter Surveys;
- Approximately two in three households requested crisis/short-term accommodation. These figures suggest low income households are experiencing housing insecurity in the WA housing market; and
- Shelter's *Profile* series has consistently revealed about one in ten households in receipt of an income less than \$599 p/w. In Survey 7 this income group increased as a proportion of homeless households to more than one in four respondents (29%). Indicating the rapid increase in rents over the last year and tight vacancy rates are combining to make access to affordable private rental very difficult for households on very low incomes.

For more information see the full report on www.shelterwa.org.au