

## SWA Housing Update, September 28, 2007

In this Update:

### **Shelter WA welcomes the State Government's new \$238million housing affordability package**

*It is encouraging times for social housing supply in WA as the State labour government continue to use some of the taxpayers' huge government surplus to rebuild WA's depleted social housing system.*

Their commitment to social housing deserves to be applauded. Some of the key funding areas include?

- 124 extra social housing dwellings on top of the 922 dwellings planned for construction for 2007/08;
- An additional \$6 million for lodging house/crisis care on top of the \$30 million injection provided in the Budget;
- Funding incentives for a small proportion of public housing tenants to relocate to housing which better matches their household size;
- \$60million for strategic land acquisitions in the metro region (the land banks will provide 1,850 new lots, the quota for public housing as yet undecided).

The overall government contribution to lodging houses is much needed given the State's perennial homelessness problem. From 2001/02 to 2005/06 the annual average homeless population in WA was 14,660 clients including accompanying children. The figure for 2005/06 was 13,750.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most poignant indicators of unmet housing need is homelessness. And it is an increase in the supply of social housing which can go some way to addressing unmet housing need. The 124 extra dwellings will be procured through spot purchase and will be targeted at priority needs which indicate the urgency of the affordable housing problem.

This new funding initiative will not make a dent on the public housing waiting list which now stands at 16,100, up 17% from September 2006. Shelter WA had been calling for a much greater contribution to the public housing programme. We urge the State government to consider restoring the public housing stock to 6% of total housing stock in WA. This was the figure reached in 1996. Pulling the stock up to 6% by 2021 (requiring 2,380 dwellings per annum till 2021), will provide significant leverage for the State government to adequately address homelessness, a growing public housing waiting list and housing stress.

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<sup>1</sup> See, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007, *Homeless people in SAAP: National data annual collection report 2005-06*, [www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)