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Shelter WA Housing News: 23 April 2004

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1. Media Release: All Suburbs Need Affordable Housing

Shelter WA's response to the recent media debate about social housing in the western suburbs explains why it makes economic and social sense to have families with a range of incomes in more expensive locations. Shelter WA therefore applauds the Planning Minister's announcement that public housing will be built in Subi Centro. "Without this type of development, Perth is in danger of becoming a divided city", said spokesperson Paul Pendergast.

Go to www.shelterwa.org.au (housing news) to read the full media release.

2. Kalgoorlie Housing Needs Study

Each year, Shelter WA holds Housing Forums in a particular region or focusing on an issue or community. The aims of these regional forums are to :

- * identify and prioritise housing issues for the region
- * develop strategies to respond to issues
- * establish ongoing links between Shelter WA and local community organisations and their workers, government departments and local government.

This year's forum will be in Kalgoorlie. Shelter WA conducted a series of preliminary meetings last week, from which it is now identifying key housing issues in the area. The issues identified include:

- * large fluctuations in house prices and rents over time, associated with a boom bust cycle and a prevalence of 'fly in fly out' workers in the mining industry
- * relatively high rents, which have encouraged investment but have also caused a limited supply of affordable rental housing
- * discrimination against Aboriginal tenants, low standards of maintenance and disputes over tenant liability and bonds in the private rental sector
- * a large and fluctuating population of 'fringedwellers': Indigenous people coming in from outlying communities who are unable to find appropriate accommodation
- * a clash of traditional kinship obligations and modern tenancy responsibilities, which can result in overcrowding and non-payment of rent
- * overlapping native title claims, overlapping mining tenancies, a variety of land tenures and overlapping jurisdictions of government agencies have combined to reduce development potential and increase land costs
- * a shortage of affordable 1/2 bedroom accommodation for singles on low

incomes

* a shortage of affordable 5/6 bedroom accommodation for large Indigenous families on low incomes

Shelter WA is currently working on further developing these key issues into a discussion paper on housing in the area. The discussion paper will also propose strategies to address these issues, which will be put up for community consultation at a forum and a series of meetings scheduled for mid June.

To register your interest in attending either of the forums, or to discuss housing issues in Kalgoorlie, please contact Karel Eringa (karel@shelterwa.org.au) by email or phone (08 9325 6660).

3. Update: First Home Ownership Inquiry

The final report of the Productivity Commission's inquiry into First Home Ownership has been completed and sent to the Australian Government for its consideration. The Government is required by the Productivity Commission Act 1998 to table the report, in each House of the Parliament, within 25 sitting days.

When the Government releases the report, a copy will be sent to all participants who made submissions, presented at the public hearings, attended roundtables or otherwise met the Commission. Copies will also be available for purchase from the Commission's publications agent (details available from the inquiry web page www.pc.gov.au/inquiry/housing/index.html) or the report can be downloaded from the web page. If you have any queries please contact Janet Savvides (administrative matters) on (03) 9653 2225 or Chris Sayers (other matters) on (03) 9653 2133.

Shelter WA produced a submission to the Inquiry for National Shelter. This is still available from www.shelterwa.org.au (publications: national shelter).

4. Year of Built Environment Grants

2004 has been officially adopted as the Year of the Built Environment. In Western Australia the Year is being coordinated by the Year of the Built Environment State Steering Committee. In supporting this special year Lotterywest is providing small grants of up to \$10,000 through a one-off grant round in 2004. Not for profit organisations and local government authorities are eligible for these grants.

Applications for grants close 31 May 2004 and a grants package can be downloaded from http://www.builtenvironment2004.wa.gov.au/ybe/news/news/lotterywest_grants/

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