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To: Karel Eringa
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Shelter WA Housing News: 26 October 2004

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1. Shelter WA Information Sheet #24: What Housing Jargon Means

Shelter WA has just released an information sheet explaining housing jargon. Information sheet #24 goes a step further than Shelter WA's information sheet #23, which sought to decode a range of housing acronyms. In information sheet #24 a brief description of key housing agencies, programs and key policies are provided. The sheet covers a number of commonly used housing terms, including State and Commonwealth funding programs.

Go to www.shelterwa.org.au (new on this site) to download the Information Sheet.

2. Reminder: Shelter WA / TAS Annual General Meeting

The Shelter WA and Tenants Advice Service Annual General Meetings will be held tomorrow; details are as follows:

Wednesday 27th October 2003, from 11.30am
at Derbarl Yerrigan Conference Room
156 Wittenoom Street, East Perth

A light lunch will be provided and the meeting will include an address by Professor Jim Ife, Lecturer in Social Policy at Curtin University on Housing and Human Rights.

Please remember to renew your membership before the meeting. You must be a financial member to nominate for the Management Committee and to vote.

3. Nine Homeswest Policy Changes

Homeswest, the rental arm of the Department of Housing and Works, has recently reviewed its rental policy manual. There were nine policy changes, relating to tenancy management, eligibility, cash assets, the Debt Discount Scheme, Disability Exclusive Use, priority assistance and eligibility for New Zealand residents. An updated version of the Homeswest Rental Policy Manual, including the nine changes is available at http://www.dhw.wa.gov.au/homes/manuals/rental/rental_policy_Contents.html

4. Forum: Homelessness and the Law

The Western Australian Society of Labor Lawyers are presenting a forum on homelessness and the law. Guest speaker will be Mr. Philip Lynch, Coordinator of the Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic in Melbourne. The forum will be opened by the Honourable Mr Chief Justice, David Malcolm. Entry is free but numbers are limited. To reserve your place please email homelessness_forum@yahoo.com. For further details and enquiries please contact David Ritter (dritter@yamatji.org.au), Kate Pedersen (kate_pedersen@yahoo.com) or Rebecca Giggs (becgiggs@cyllene.uwa.edu.au).

5.30 - 7.30pm, Thursday 28 October
Boardroom, Minter Ellison
Level 49 Central Park
152-158 St Georges' Terrace, Perth

5. Report: Housing Industry Forecasting Group

The Minister for Housing and Works, the Hon. Nick Griffiths, MLC launched the HIFG's latest set of forecasts on Thursday 21 October. The Housing Industry Forecasting Group was established in April 2000, under the auspices of the Department of Housing and Works. It consists of industry and Government representatives and its role is to provide background information, interpretation of trends, and medium-term forecasts for the housing market in Western Australia.

The Report finds that housing in Western Australia has "experienced a buoyant period of activity over the past three years. This has led to a lengthening of the development pipeline and a substantial backlog of work yet to be done due to burgeoning material and labour shortages." Building approvals in 2003/04 were at their highest level for a decade, while dwelling commencements increased for a third consecutive year. "As expected, Perth dominates the activity but Regional WA has also experienced an increase in activity, primarily in the Peel and South West." The Report also highlights the return of first home purchasers to the market after the new State Government's stamp duty concessions for first home buyers took effect in July.

The HIFG identified industry capacity as the key issue confronting the sector that may have long term implications on housing production and affordability in Western Australia. While completions continue to be in the order of 18,000 per year, commencements have been greater than this number, with 22,400 starts in 2003/04. As a result, the number of dwellings under construction is increasing dramatically. The HIFG is forecasting 21,000 dwelling commencements in 2004/05 and 19,000 in 2005/06.

The Report can be downloaded at
http://www.dhw.wa.gov.au/policy/policy_hifg0410.pdf.

6. New Shadow Housing Minister and Departmental Changes

The Australian Labor Party has named a new front bench, including a new Shadow Housing Minister. Kelvin Thomson is the Member for Wills in Victoria, and has been named Shadow Minister for Housing and Urban Development as well as Regional Development and Roads. He was previously the Shadow Minister for Sustainability, the Environment and Heritage and has also served as Shadow Assistant Treasurer.

On the other side of the political fence, the Senator the Hon Kay Patterson remains as Minister for Family and Community Services. However, she will be in charge of a Department with a significantly reduced role, focusing on providing policy advice. A newly created Department of Human Services and

Minister for Workforce Participation will oversee direct service delivery, much of which had been part of Family and Community Services.

SWA Update gives fortnightly updates on housing issues in Western Australia.

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