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To: Karel Eringa
Subject: [SWA Update] Shelter WA Housing News: 18 March 2005
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Shelter WA Housing News: 18 March 2005

1. Discussion Paper: Underoccupancy in Homeswest Dwellings
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3. News: New Housing Minister
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1. Discussion Paper: Underoccupancy in Homeswest Dwellings

A significant proportion of Homeswest's four, five and six bedroom dwellings is under occupied, having one or more spare bedrooms. At the same time Homeswest has a significant waiting list of large families, who in some zones are waiting in excess of 4 years for an allocation. The Homeswest Operational Standing Committee (HOSC) supports the efficient use of Homeswest stock. However, it is concerned about the impact of the policy changes Homeswest proposes to address this issue.

In response, HOSC has formed a working party and developed terms of reference in order to investigate the extent of under occupancy, its impacts and to recommend actions to reduce the level of under occupancy. The Working Party includes representatives from Shelter WA, Department of Housing and Works, Tenants Advice Service and Department of Employment and Consumer Protection.

The Working Party has developed a Discussion Paper, which gives an overview of under occupancy in Homeswest dwellings, as well as a number of consultation questions. The paper will be used as the basis for two community consultation sessions, to be held as follows:

Wednesday 13 April, 9.30 AM to 11.30 AM
 Claisebrook Lotteries House
 33 Moore Street
 EAST PERTH

Tuesday 19 April, 1 PM to 2.30 PM
 ASWA (Agencies for South West Accommodation)
 40 Charles Street
 BUNBURY

To RSVP or for more information, please contact Paul Pendergast at Shelter WA (paul@shelterwa.org.au / 08 9325 6660).

The Discussion Paper on Homeswest Under Occupancy can be downloaded for free at www.shelterwa.org.au/housing_news.htm

2. News: Homelessness increases, but no funding agreement

According to a report released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare today, some 152,900 people received accommodation or other support services for the homeless in 2003-04 through the government-funded Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). This figure included 100,200 adults or unaccompanied children, and 52,700 children accompanying their parent or guardian.

The report, *Homeless People in SAAP: SAAP National Data Collection Annual Report 2003-04*, cited

domestic violence as the main reason clients gave for seeking agency support, with this reason given in 20% of cases overall. It also showed that the number of SAAP clients (excluding accompanying children) has risen from 83,200 in 1996-97 to 100,200 in 2003-04.

The report found that Western Australia recorded:

- the joint lowest percentage of support periods to unaccompanied males (31%),
- the joint highest proportion of support periods for females with children (93%),
- the joint highest average number of accompanying child support periods per support period (2.1).
- the lowest average length of support (31 days), compared to 79 days in the ACT and an Australia wide average of 44 days.

This news comes just days after the funding negotiations for the SAAP V agreement have ended in an impasse. State and territory community services ministers and the Federal Community Services Minister, Senator Kay Patterson, failed to reach agreement about their levels of contribution to the new SAAP agreement during meeting held on Friday 11 March.

In a media release Minister Patterson said she was disappointed the states and territories had not agree to increase their share of SAAP funding from 40% to 50% "despite an offer of increased base funding". State and territory ministers are continuing to argue that they already put in the additional money for homelessness beyond SAAP, such as through state homelessness strategies. The Federal Minister has reassured the sector that all Ministers have agreed to "make every effort" to resolve the issue by 1 July 2005, when the current SAAP agreement expires.

3. News: New Housing Minister

The Gallop Government has appointed Francis (Fran) Logan MLA as the new Minister for Housing and Works. Mr Logan takes over the portfolio from Nick Griffiths, and has also been appointed as Minister for Heritage and Minister Assisting in Planning and Infrastructure.

Fran Logan was elected as the State Member for Cockburn in 2001. Prior to this he worked for the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union from 1986 as the local organiser for the Cockburn and Kwinana regions. He has also worked in the Pilbara and for engineering companies as a fitter on mining equipment. As well as his trade qualification, Mr Logan has an honours degree from Sydney University.

The new Minister comes to the portfolio at a time when there are a number of challenges and opportunities. In the immediate future, he will need to find a new Director General to head the Department of Housing and Works. In the medium term, important policy decisions need to be made in order to finalise the State Housing Strategy and restructure the delivery of housing to Indigenous people in a world without ATSIC. Finally, Mr Logan will need to think strategically on how Western Australia can best position itself for the end of the current Commonwealth State Housing Agreement in 2008.

Shelter WA wishes Fran Logan well in addressing these challenges.

4. Position Vacant: Administrator, Claisebrook Lotteries House

Claisebrook Lotteries House Association (CLHA) provides office accommodation to not-for-profit community based agencies. CLHA is seeking a part time Administrator. The Administrator will be responsible for the overall administration of Claisebrook Lotteries House, provide support to the tenants and maintain a cohesive environment throughout the House.

Part Time (15 hours per week)
 Salary Range \$32 438 to \$ 34 614 pro rata
 SACS Award CSW 3
 FREE Parking bay provided

Experience working in an administrative capacity is essential and experience within the community sector would be highly regarded.

We are an Equal Employment Opportunity employer and offer a smoke free environment.

For further job specific information please contact Karel Eringa on (08) 9325 6660 or Joanne Lowth on (08) 9221 9411. (Not to be contacted for job application packages)

Prospective applicants must obtain a Job Application Package that provides further details about the duties of the position and the selection criteria. To obtain an information pack about the position contact Helen Feasey 9221 9499 or email helen@taswa.org .

Applications in writing including: a resume, two contactable referees and a statement addressing the selection criteria are invited to be submitted by the close of business 4.30pm on Wednesday 30th March 2005

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